Josephine V. Harmon

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INDIA:

THE

PEARL OF PEARL RIVER.

BY

MRS. EMMA D. E. N. SOUTHWORTH.

AUTHOR OF "THE MISSING BRIDE," "THE LOST HEIRESS," "THE DESERTED WIFE," "THE WIFE'S VICTORY," ETC.

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MOVING INTO WOLF GROVE.

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"How changed since last her speaking eye
Glanced gladness round the glittering room,
Where high-born men were proud to wait—
Where beauty watched to imitate
Her gentle voice and lovely mien—
And gather from her air and gait
The graces of its queen!"—BYRON.

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1856

TO

MRS. HELEN MOORE WALL,

OF PETERSBURG, VIRGINIA,

This Volume is most affectionately Dedicated,

BY HER FRIEND,

EMMA D. E. N. SOUTHWORTH.

PROSPECT COTTAGE,

February 16*th*, 1856.

PREFACE.

THE leading incidents of the following story were suggested by circumstances in the life of a near relative, long since, we trust, in Heaven. I have used the novelist's privilege in giving a happier termination to the fiction than is warranted by the facts.

E. D. E. N. S.

PROSPECT COTTAGE,

February 16*th*, 1856.

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INDIA:

THE

PEARL OF PEARL RIVER.

CHAPTER I.

THE COLLEGIAN'S SUPPER.

"Filled is life's goblet to the brim."—*Longfellow.*

"INDIA!" exclaimed Mark Sutherland, rising at the head of his table, and waving high the brimming glass, while his fine dark countenance lighted up with enthusiasm. A young Ajax in athletic beauty and strength, stood the Mississippian, until—

"India!" responded his friend Lauderdale, from the foot of the table.

"India!" echoed the young men around the board, as they all arose, and, standing, honoured the toast. Then the glasses jingled merrily down upon the table, and then—

"Now that in blind faith we have worshipped your goddess—who is India? Is it a woman or a quarter of the globe—your idolatry?"

"India!" ejaculated the young Southerner with fervor. "India!

"'Oh! a woman! friend, a woman! Why, a beast had scarce been duller'

than to have harboured such a question! Fill high your glasses again, and

"'Twixt the red wine and the chalice'

let me breathe her beauty's name. Gentlemen, are you ready?—The Pearl of Pearl River!"

"The Pearl of Pearl River!" responded Lauderdale.

"The Pearl of Pearl River!" re-echoed all those gay youths, as this toast was also quaffed standing, and the empty glasses rattled down upon the table.

This was the parting toast, and the company broke up to separate. The young guests all crowded around their youthful host with adieus, regrets, congratulations, and kind wishes; for all these opposite phrases were equally appropriate, as will be seen.

Mark Sutherland was the son and nephew of the celebrated Pearl River planters—the three brothers Sutherland. He was the prospective possessor of three immense estates—being the heir of the first, betrothed to the heiress of the second, and co-heir with her to the third extensive plantation. He had just concluded a brilliant collegiate course with distinguished honour; he was soon to return south, to enter upon his patrimony, and claim the hand of his affianced bride, before he set forth upon his European travels. And this was his valedictory entertainment, given to his classmates. For him, indeed—

"Filled was life's goblet to the brim!"

No wonder those fine strong eyes danced with anticipation as he shook hands right and left. He was, up to this time, a frank, thoughtless, joyous, extravagant fellow—selfish because he knew nothing of sorrow, and wasteful because he knew nothing of want. Affluent in youth, health, and love—affluent in wealth, honour, and homage—he seemed to consider gold valueless as dust, and deference only his just due. He "the heir of all the ages" past of thought and toil, had entered upon his intellectual inheritance with great *êclat;* but as yet not one mite had he added to the store; not one thought had he bestowed upon the great subjects that now engross all earnest minds. Too full of youthful fire, vitality, love, hope, and joy, for any grave thought or feeling to find room in his brain or heart, was the planter's son. How, indeed, could earnest thought find entrance through such a crowd of noisy joys to his heart? He stood upon the threshold of the past, indeed, and his face was set forward towards the future; but not one onward step had he taken. Why should he trouble himself? The bounteous future was advancing to him, smiling, and laden with all the riches of life and time.

But he stood, receiving the adieus of his young friends, and dealing out wholesale and retail invitations for all and each to come and visit him, for an indefinite length of time, or until they were tired. At last they were all gone, except Lauderdale, his chum, who was passing some days with him, as his guest, at the Minerva House.

"You are an enviable dog, Sutherland," exclaimed the latter, clapping him sharply upon the shoulder. "You are a deuced enviable villain! By my soul, it

is enough to make a poor man like me dissatisfied with his lot, or the present arrangements of society, which amounts to precisely the same thing, I suppose. Deuce take me, if it is not enough to make me turn Agrarian, Chartist, Radical, or whatever may be the new name for the old discontent! Just contrast our positions! Here are you, at one-and-twenty years of age, entirely free from all toil and care for the whole remainder of your life. You will now return to a sumptuous southern home, on a magnificent estate, where troops of friends wait to welcome you, and troops of slaves attend to serve you, and where your bride, the very pearl of beauty, dreams of and languishes for your presence; and, above all—yes, I speak reflectingly, above *all*—more than sumptuous home, and troops of friends, and trains of servants, and blushing bride—where, lying perdue at your service, is a plenty of the root of all evil—

'Gold to save—gold to lend—
Gold to give—gold to spend.'

While I!—well, I shall just plod on in the old way, teaching school one half the year to pay my college expenses for the other, until I find myself in some lawyer's shop, in arrears with my landlady, in debt to my washerwoman—detesting to walk up the street, because I should pass the tailor's store—abhorring to walk down it, because I should be sure to see the shoemaker standing in his door. With no more comfort or convenience in my life than can be enjoyed between my little back-chamber, up four pair of stairs in a cheap boarding-house, and the straight-backed chair and high-topped desk of the law shop. And no

more love, or hope, or poetry, in my life, than may be found bound up between the covers of Coke upon Lyttleton. Or perhaps I shall turn private tutor, and advertise, 'A highly respectable young gentleman, a graduate of Yale College, wishes to obtain,' &c.; and you, who will be by this time the grave head of a family, with several little domestic liabilities, will probably answer the advertisement; and I shall find myself teaching the names of the keys of knowledge to young Mark and his brothers. Oh!"——

"Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!" laughed Sutherland.

"Oh, *you'll* patronise me, rather! *You'll* be kind to me; for you'll say to yourself and friends, 'He was a college friend of mine, poor fellow.' I fancy I hear and see you saying it now, with that careless, cordial, jolly condescension of yours."

"Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! My *dear* Lincoln! My *dear* fellow, why should that be? Why should you be pettifogger or pedagogue, unless you have a vocation for it? Why should anybody do what they don't want to do? Life is rich—full of wealth, and love, and joy, and glory. Enter and take possession."

"Enter and take possession! Yes, that is what *you* can do. Life is full of wealth, and love, and joy, and glory, for *you*, indeed; and you can afford to mock me with those words! But, never mind, my fine flamingo! I have heard the wise say that happiness is not so unequally distributed, after all. And I, for one, don't believe this cake of comfort is going to be so very unjustly divided between us, or that you will have all the white sugar on the top, and I all the burnt paper at the bottom."

"See here, my friend, remember that we good-for-nothing Mississippians are not initiated into the mysteries of the kitchen, and therefore I don't understand your culinary figure of speech at all."

"Oh, go on! go on! You're a young bear!"

"A young bear! Comrades! Oh, they are all gone! A young bear? Oh, I suppose he alludes to my black whiskers and hair, and my shag over coat!"

"I mean *your* trouble is all before you!"

"Trouble? Oh, my dear boy, that is a word with out a meaning! Trouble? What *is* trouble? What idea is the word designed to represent? Trouble? Oh, my dear fellow, it is all a mistake, a mere notion, a superstition, a prejudice; a saying of old folks, who, being near the verge of departure from this bright, glad, joyous, jubilant world, vainly try to console themselves by slandering it as a world of trouble, and talk of a *better* one, to which they are progressing. If this world in itself is not 'good,' as the Creator pronounced it to be in the beginning, by all the rules of comparison, how can any other world be said to be better?"

"Well, I believe in the better world as much as they do; but look you! the pleasantest notion I have of Heaven is its being—being"——

"Oh, don't let it go any further—as *good* as this world, and only better as far as it endures longer. *This* world is full of all that is great and glorious for enjoyment! And, Lincoln, my fine fellow, enter and take possession! *Don't* teach or study law! *Don't* plod; it is ungentlemanly. Somebody, I suppose, must teach and study law, and do such things—but don't

you. Do you leave it to those a—those persons a—those in fact who have the plebeian instinct of labor; you apprehend? They really *enjoy* work now! Just think of it! I suppose that gracious nature, intending them to carry on the work of the world, endowed them with a *taste for it!* Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! But *I*'ve no vocation for it! Neither have you, my dear boy. Don't force your nature in an opposite direction to which it tends, therefore! Enter life, and take possession!"

"Humph! thank you! This is to say, 'follow my attractions,' and if they 'attract' me to lead an idle life, and live upon other people, why, so much the better—they are my attractions; and if they 'attract' me to pick my host's pocket, or run away with his daughter, it is the same thing by the same law."

"Ha! ha! ha! Oh, certainly; remembering that your host might experience an attraction to blow your brains out."

"Pleasant points to be drawn to. I guess I shall not follow my attractions! I'll stick to the little law shop, and relieve weariness by grumbling. Some distinguished men have emerged from those little law dens; and, by the way, seriously, my dear Mark, I think that I, that you, even *you*, possess those very qualities out of which *really* distinguished men are formed, and that if destiny had not 'thrust' a sort of moneyed and landed greatness upon you, that even *you* would 'achieve' some judicial, political, diplomatic, or intellectual greatness of some sort."

"Ha! ha! ha! even *I!* Well, that is a stretch of possibility, indeed. Even *I*, humph! *Mais à nos moutons.* Will you come home with me? Do come

and be my guest *à éternité*—or until you win some rich Mississippi beauty. Woo beauty, not Blackstone, for a fortune. You have so much more genius for the first than for the last, my fine fellow."

"Oh, then you would have me turn fortune-hunter, and, under cover of your friendship and introduction, aim at some heiress, and bring her down, and so secure wealth?"

"Set fire to you, *no!* Whom do you take me for? Do you think that *I* would present an adventurer to Southern creoles? *No, sir!* But I *do* want you to fall in love with a Southern beauty, and fortune would follow, of course."

"I do not see it at all. There are several links wanting in that chain of reasoning. But, apropos of beauty, love, and marriage. Tell me something more of Miss Sutherland, *votre belle fiancée.*"

"India! listen, you." And he took Lauderdale's arm, and turned to walk up and down the room for a confidential chat. "Listen, you! I named her just now over the wine. I regret to have done so. Would it were undone! But so it is; in some moment of excitement a word passes our lips, and it is unrecallable forever. She is so sacred to my heart, so divine to my soul! I often wonder if Helen of Argos were half as beautiful as she—my India."

"What a strange, charming name that is for a woman!"

"Is it not? But, rich, luxurious, and gorgeous, in its associations, too—(and that is why it was given to her) it suits her. She is India. Her mother was like her—a beautiful, passionate Havanienne, rich in genius, poetry, song—luxuriating in the beautiful creations

of others, yet far too indolent to create. More than all, she lost herself amid the oriental elysiums of Moore, and thence she named her only daughter Hinda. And as the maiden budded and bloomed into womanhood —well, yes, I believe, after all, it was I who softened down her name to India. It has the same derivation, it is the same name, in fact. Oh! and it suits her."

"Describe your nonpareil to me."

"I cannot. By my soul's idolatry, I cannot. The best of beauty—the charm, the soul, the divine of beauty—can never be described or painted. It is spiritual, and can only be perceived."

"Humph! is she fair?"

"No—yet radiant."

"Dark?"

"No—yet shadowy."

"Is she tall?"

"No."

"Short?"

"No, no; nonsense!"

"What, neither tall nor short? Perhaps she is of medium height."

"I do not know. I cannot tell, indeed. But oh! she is beautiful—she is glorious! My lady, my queen!"

"To come to something tangible, what is the colour of her eyes?"

"Oh! what is the colour of love, or joy, or heaven? for as soon could I tell you the colour of these as of her witching eyes. I only know they have light, softly thrilling all the chords of life, like music; and shadows, calming my spirit, like silence."

"Well, I admit the hue of beautiful eyes to be a

mysterious point; but hair, now, is a little more certain in that respect. Tell me the hue of your lady's tresses."

"I cannot. I only know they are rich, warm, and lustrous."

"Humph! satisfactory portrait that. Oh! here is Flamingo. Come, Flame, and tell me what is the colour of your young mistress's hair."

The latter part of this speech was addressed to Mr. Sutherland's valet, who had just entered. Flamingo was a character in his way; a handsome, bright mulatto, with quite a "wealth" of bushy black silky hair and whiskers. Very mercurial in temperament, and excessively fond of dress, he presented quite as gay and gorgeous an exterior as the famous feathered biped, his namesake. Flamingo stood for a moment in a quandary, at the suddenness and novelty of the question put to him.

"Oh, come, now; you are not poetically bewildered. Can't you tell us the colour of the lady's hair?"

"De colour o' Miss Inda's hair, sir—a—yes, sir—its—its—'bout de colour o' 'lasses taffy, when you're 'bout half done pullin' of it, an' it's shining."

"Molasses taffy! Out, you wretch! It is amber-hued, Lauderdale—*amber-hued*, understand; the rich, warm, lustrous hue of amber. Molasses taffy! Oh, villain! To think I could not find a comparison in all nature precious enough for those precious tresses, and he should compare them to molasses taffy! Out of my sight, beast! *Molasses taffy! Pah!*" exclaimed Sutherland, in disgust, while Lauderdale laughed aloud, and Flamingo vanished into the adjoining chamber, where

he turned on the gas, and busied himself in making the apartment comfortable for the night.

"Come, let's get out of this mess before the waiters come to clear away the service. Look! This is one of the things that always make me melancholy," said Sutherland, pointing to the disordered table.

Both young men were about to retire, when Sutherland again clasped the hand of his friend and said—"But you have not yet told me whether you will accompany me home. Come, laying all jesting and raillery aside, you know how happy I should be to have you."

"And you know what I have told you before, my dear Sutherland, that I must go to New York for the anniversary week. And by the way, my dear Damon, why cannot you stop a few days before you go South, and attend some of these meetings?"

"Me! Heavens! You shock me! You deprive me of words—of breath! *I!* a Mississippian! Why, look you; if I were to attend one of those meetings, and if it should be known in my neighborhood, my friends would turn me off, my uncles disinherit me, and my father rise from his grave to reproach me. Sir, my friends and relatives are 'of the most straitest sect of the Pharisees!'"

"And do you share their opinions?"

"Opinions? Opinions, my dear fellow! I have no opinions. Opinions, it appears to me, are the currency of—of—those who have nothing else to offer in exchange for a living."

"Levity! Oh, Mark, how you sin against your own fine mind!"

"Oh! come, come, come, no more of that. 'Sir, praise is very flat, except from the fair sex.'"

"Ah! I see you are hopelessly flighty to-night. Good night."

"Good night. Stay; you *will* go with me?"

"No; unless you first accompany me to New York, and remain through the anniversary week, and attend the meetings."

"And hear myself traduced, slandered, abused, cursed! A pleasant invitation—thank you."

"And get yourself *dis*abused of many things, you should rather say. See here, Mark, my proposition is perfectly fair and reasonable, and has a meaning in it. Observe: you invite me to the South, and laughingly promise that an actual acquaintance with the patriarchal system shall cool what you call my fever; and that a Southern bride with two hundred negroes, shall completely cure it. Well, I am reasonable. I am open to conviction. I am willing to try it—to examine the 'peculiar institution' with the utmost impartiality. Nor do I fear or doubt the result. But observe further. Both of us, it seems, have heard but one side of this great question. I therefore consent to go with you to the South, and spend some weeks on a cotton plantation, only on condition that you accompany me to New York, and attend the anniversary meetings. In a word, I will *see* your side of the question, if you will *hear* ours."

"I'll do it, I'll go," exclaimed Sutherland, laughing, and clapping his hand cordially into that of Lauderdale. "I'll go, nor have *I* any doubt or fear as to the result."

CHAPTER II.

A SOUTHERN HOME.

"—— A villa beautiful to see;
Marble-porched and cedar-chambered,
Hung with silken drapery;
Bossed with ornaments of silver,
Interlaid with gems and gold;
Filled with carvings from cathedrals,
Rescued in the days of old;
Eloquent with books and pictures,
All that luxury can afford;
Warm with statues that Pygmalion
Might have fashioned and adored.
In the forest glades and vistas,
Lovely are the light and gloom:
Fountains sparkle in the gardens,
And exotics breathe perfume."—*Mackay.*

THE sun shines on no more beautiful and entrancing region than the vale of Pearl river. It is the Elysium of the sunny south, reposing between the rich alluvial lands of the Mississippi, and the fragrant* pine forests of the Pascagoula. The green land of the valley seems to roll in gentle undulations, like the waves of a calm sea. Between the swelling hills, or rather waves of verdure, flow crystal streams towards the bosom of the Pearl. These lovely hills are capped

* All who have travelled through or near the pine woods of Mississippi know the effect of the southern sun upon these trees, ripening and rarefying from them a most grateful and salubrious fragrance, called the "terebinthine odour." The effect of the climate is still more obvious upon ornamental trees and flowers. Those that lose much of their luxuriant beauty and fragrance in the North, attain in the South their utmost perfection.

with groves of the most beautiful and odoriferous of the southern flowering trees. These charming streams are shaded with the most fragrant and delightful of the flowering shrubs and vines. Here nature throws around her riches with an unsparing hand and a wonderful exuberance of luxury. Birds of the most brilliant plumage and enchanting melody fill all the summer groves, at early morn and eve, with their perfect music. Flowers of countless varieties, and most beautiful forms and hues, laden all the air with their ambrosial perfume. The breeze is charged with music and fragrance, as from the spicy groves of Araby the Blest.

If in this garden—this conservatory of Nature, where all her choicest luxuries are assembled—there is one spot more favoured than all the rest, it is "Cashmere," the beautiful seat of Clement Sutherland.

The brothers Sutherland emigrated from the old dominion, and settled on the Pearl river, in those palmy days of cotton-planting, when every planter seemed a very Midas, turning all he touched to gold, and when the foundations were laid of some of the present enormous southern fortunes. It was no love for the land of sun that brought the Sutherlands there. They had heard that the common annual profits of the cotton crops were from ten to eighty thousand dollars; and they had sold their tobacco plantation on the Potomac, and emigrated to the valley of the Pearl. The spot selected by the brothers was that Eden of the valley where the Pearl river turns with a serpentine bend in the form of an S with an additional curve, shaping the land into two round points to the west, and one—the largest and loveliest—to the east.

The east point had been taken up by Clement Sutherland, the eldest of the brothers, and the west points by the two others. Thus Clement Sutherland's plantation lay embosomed between those of his brethren. On the upper side lay that of Mark, the second brother, and on the lower, that of Paul, the third and bachelor brother.

Very early in life, and some years previous to their emigration, Mark Sutherland had been united in marriage to a lady of St. Mary's—one of the noblest of Maryland's noble daughters. From her, their only son, Mark Sutherland, the younger, inherited a strong mind, warm heart, and high spirit; from his father he took the stalwart form, athletic strength, and dark and sometimes terrible beauty, that marked the race of Sutherland.

Clement Sutherland had remained unmarried until long after his settlement upon the Pearl. But one autumn, while on a visit to New Orleans, to negotiate the sale of his cotton, he chanced to meet a beautiful West Indian girl, whom he afterwards wooed and won for his bride. Whether the sweet Havanienne, or the large fortune of which she was the sole heiress, was the object of his worship, was a mooted point by those who knew him best. It is probable he adored both. Certainly no slightest wish or whim of the lovely Creole remained unsatisfied. It was she who gave the charming scene of his home the appropriate name of Cashmere. She it was who persuaded him to pause in his incessant, exclusive thinking, talking, and acting, about cotton-growing, and his mad pursuit of gain, to build and adorn an elegant villa upon the site of the temporary framed house to which he

had brought the beautiful *epicurienne*. Her rare artistic taste presided over the architecture and embellishment of the mansion, and the laying out and ornamenting of the grounds. But here the evanescent energy of the indolent West Indian died out. She was, at best, but a lovely and fragile spring flower, that faded and fell ere the summer of her life had come. She left a child of perfect beauty—a little girl—who inherited her mother's graceful harmony of form and complexion, and her father's strength and vigour of constitution.

Immediately after the death of her mother, the orphaned infant had been taken home by her aunt, Mrs. Mark Sutherland, to share the maternal cares bestowed upon her only son. The lady gave herself up to the rearing and education of these children. And not the noble mother of the Gracchi was prouder of her "jewels" than Mrs. Sutherland of hers. Thus the infancy and childhood of Mark and Hinda were passed together—the same mother's heart, the same nursery, the same school-room, nay, the same book, with their heads together, and their black and golden locks mingled, were shared by the children. And no Guinea mice or turtle doves were ever fonder of each other than our boy and girl.

It was a woful day when they were first separated —Mark to enter college, and Hinda to be placed at a fashionable boarding-school. Tears fell on both sides, like spring showers. Young Mark, when laughed at for his girlish tears, angrily rejoined, that it was no shame to weep; that the renowned hero, Achilles, had wept when they took Briseis away from him, also when his friend Patroclus was slain.

Paul Sutherland, the third brother, had remained up to the present time unmarried, with the determination to continue so until the end of his life. He bestowed his affections with paternal pride and devotion upon his niece and nephew, resolving to make them his joint heirs, and with his own large property swell the enormous bulk of theirs. Just two years previous to the opening of our story, the Pearl river trio had been broken by the death of Mark Sutherland, the elder. Young Sutherland had hastened home to console his widowed mother, but not long did the widow permit him to remain. The lady sent him back at the commencement of the next following term.

But it is time to describe more particularly Cashmere, the charming seat of Clement Sutherland, and the principal scene of our drama. The estate itself was a very extensive one, comprising several thousand acres of the richest land in the vale. That part of the plantation on which the villa had been erected lay in a bend of the Pearl river, surrounded on three sides—north, east, and south—by its pellucid waters. The whole of this area is occupied by the mansion and ornamental grounds.

The villa itself is a very elegant edifice of white freestone, fronting the river. The building is long and broad, in proportion to its height—this being the necessary plan of all southern mansions, to save them from the effects of the terrible tornadoes that sweep over the country, and to which a higher elevation would expose them. But the mansion is relieved from all appearance of heaviness, by a light and elegant Ionic colonnade, sustaining an open verandah run-

ning around three sides of the building. On the fourth side, looking to the south, the aspect is diversified by a large bay window projecting from the lower story, and an elegant Venetian balcony from the upper one.

The villa is also shaded on three sides—north, west, and south—by a grove of the most beautiful and fragrant of the southern trees—the splendid tulip-poplar, lifting to the skies its slender shaft, crested with elegantly-shaped leaves of the most brilliant and intense verdure, and crowned with its bell-shaped flowers of the most vivid and gorgeous flame colour; the beautiful cotton-wood tree, softly powdered over with its formless snowy blossoms; the queenly magnolia-grandiflora, with its glittering green foliage and dazzling white flowers and rich oppressive aroma; the pretty red-bud, with its umbrella-shaped top, its crumpled, heart-shaped leaves, and scarlet tufts; the bois-d'arc, in full bloom, the most splendid and magnificent of ornamental trees, uniting the rarest qualities of the orange tree and the catalpa; the chinienne, with its vivid green foliage and brilliant purple flowers, dropping delicious but heavy narcotic odours, weighing down the nerves and brain into luxurious repose, and stupefying the very birds that shelter in its aromatic shades, so that they may be taken captive with the bare hand; the imperial catalpa, sovereign of the grove by virtue of the grandeur and elegance of its form, the grace and beauty of its foliage, and the ambrosial perfume of its flowers, filling all the air around with its delightful fragrance; and many, many others, so various, beautiful, and aromatic, that one is lost and entranced amid the luxuriating wealth

of the grove. Birds of the most splendid plumage and the most exquisite melody—the goldfinch, the oriole, the redbird, the paroquet, the nightingale, swallow, and innumerable others, shelter here, and their songs fill the air with music. No artificial walk disfigures the sward. The green and velvety turf affords the softest, coolest footing. Rustic seats of twisted bow-wood are under the trees; here and there fountains of crystal water leap, sparkle, and fall, ever playing silvery accompaniments to the song of birds; statues of Diana, Pan, and the wood-nymphs, peopled the grove. Its shades are the delightful resort of the Sutherlands and their friends, to enjoy the freshness and brilliancy of the morning, to find shelter from the burning rays of the sun at noon, or to luxuriate in the delicious breeze of the evening. This Arcadian grove, as has been said, surrounded the house on three sides—north, west, and south.

The east is the front of the house towards the river. The view here is open, and the most beautiful, charming, and variegated, to be imagined.

From the colonnaded verandah a flight of broad marble steps lead to a terrace carpeted with grass, and planted with rose-bushes—the Damascus, the Provence, the scarlet, the white, the multiflora, the moss rose; daily, monthly, and perpetual roses; "roses—everywhere roses"—such a luxuriant exuberance of roses upon this velvety terrace. The rose terrace is divided from the lawn by a *treillage* of the most delicate and elaborate trellis-work; and this also is wreathed and festooned by running rose vines.

Below this spreads the lawn on every side, not level, but gently waving, and covered with grass as soft, as

smooth, and as downy as velvet; and everywhere the eye roves with pleasure over a turf of brilliant intense green, except where it is variegated with the floral mosaic work of gay parterres, or trellised arbours, or reservoirs, or single magnificent forest trees left standing in honour of their monarchal grandeur. The parterres are rich, beautiful, and fragrant beyond description; there our hot-house plants bloom in the open air; and there our common garden flowers—violets, lilies, roses, myrtles, irises, and innumerable others—flourish with surpassing luxuriance. The arbours, of delicate trellis-work and elegant form, are shaded and adorned with running vines of rich Armenean and cape jessamine, honeysuckles, and woodbine. The reservoirs contain gold fish, and other ornamental specimens of the piscatorial kingdom.

This extensive and beautiful lawn is surrounded by an iron open-work fencing, very light and elegant in appearance, yet very strong and impassable. Three ornamented gates relieve the uniformity of this iron trellis; one on the north leads through to the orange groves, always inviting and delightful, whether in full bloom, and shedding ambrosial perfume in the spring, or laden with their golden fruit in the fall. The gate on the north admitted into the vineyard, where every variety of the finest and rarest grapes flourished in luxuriant abundance. The one on the east is central between these two others, and leads from the lawn down to the white and pebbly beach of the Pearl, where pretty boats are always moored for the convenience of the rambler who might desire to cross the river.

And then the curving river itself is well named the

Pearl, from the soft, semi-transparent glow of roseate, whitish, or saffron tints, caught from the heavens.

Across the soft water, in rich contrast, lie hills, and groves, and cotton-fields—the latter, one of the gayest features in southern scenery. They are sometimes a mile square. They are planted in straight rows, six feet apart; and the earth between them, of a rich Spanish-red colour, is kept entirely clean from weeds. The plants grow to the height of seven feet, and spread in full-leaved branches, bearing brilliant white and gold-hued flowers. When in full bloom, a cotton-field by itself is a gorgeous landscape. Beyond these hills, and groves, and cotton fields, are other cotton-fields, and groves, and hills, extending on and on, until afar off they blend with the horizon, in soft, indistinct hues, mingled together like the tints of the clouds.

I have led you through the beautiful grounds immediately around and in front of the villa; but behind the mansion, and back of the grove, there are gardens and orchards, and still other fields of cotton and out-houses, and offices, and the negro village called "The Quarters."

CHAPTER III.

THE PLANTER'S DAUGHTER.

She has halls and she has vassals, and the resonant steam eagles
Follow fast on the directing of her floating dove-like hand,
With a thunderous vapour trailing underneath the starry vigils,
So to mark upon the blasted heavens the measure of her lands.

Mrs. Browning.

THE summer sun had just sunk below the horizon, leaving all the heavens suffused with a pale golden and roseate light, that falls softly on the semi-transparent waters of the Pearl, flowing serenely on between its banks of undulating hills and dales, and green and purple lights and glooms. No jarring sight or sound breaks the voluptuous stillness of the scene and hour. The golden light has faded from the windows and balconies of the villa, and sunk with the sunken sun. An evening breeze is rising from the distant pine-woods, that will soon tempt the inmates forth to enjoy its exhilarating and salubrious freshness and fragrance. But as yet all is quiet about the mansion.

In the innermost sanctuary of that house reposes Miss Sutherland. It is the most elegant of a sumptuous suit of apartments, upon which Mr. Sutherland had spared no amount of care or expense—having summoned from New Orleans a French *artiste*, of distinguished genius in his profession, to superintend their interior architecture, furnishing and adornment.

The suit consists of a boudoir, two drawing-rooms, a hall or picture gallery, a music room, a double

parlour, a library, and dining and breakfast rooms; and, by the machinery of grooved doors, all these splendid apartments may be thrown into one magnificent saloon.

But the most finished and perfect of the suite is the luxurious boudoir of India. It is a very bower of beauty and love, a *chef d'œuvre* of artistic genius, a casket worthy to enshrine the Pearl of Pearl River.

There she reposes in the recess of the bay window, "silk-curtained from the sun." This bay window is the only one in the apartment; it is both deep and lofty, and is a small room in itself. It is curtained off from the main apartment by drapery of purple damask satin, lined with gold-coloured silk, and festooned by gold cords and tassels. The interior of the recess is draped with thin gold-coloured silk alone; and the evening light, glowing through it, throws a warm, rich, lustrous atmosphere around the form of Oriental beauty, reposing on the silken couch in the recess.

It is a rare type of beauty, not easy to realise by your imagination, blending the highest charms of the spiritual, the intellectual, and the sensual, in seeming perfect harmony; it is a costly type of beauty, possessed often only at a fearful discount of happiness; it is a dangerous organisation, full of fatality to its possessor and all connected with her; for that lovely and voluptuous repose resembles the undisturbed serenity of the young leopardess, or the verdant and flowery surface of the sleeping volcano. It is a richly and highly gifted nature, but one that, more than all others, requires in early youth the firm and steady guidance of the wise and good, and that in after life

needs the constant controlling influence of Christian principle.

India Sutherland has never known another guide than her own good pleasure. "Queen o'er herself" she is *not*, indeed, unhappily; but queen instead over father and lover, friends, relatives, and servants. In truth hers is a gentle and graceful reign. It could not be otherwise, over subjects so devoted as hers. All of them, from Mr. Sutherland her father, down to Oriole her bower-maid, deem it their best happiness to watch, anticipate, and prevent her wants; and she is pleased to repay such devotion with lovely smiles and loving words. She is, indeed, the tamest as well as the most beautiful young leopardess that ever sheathed claws and teeth in the softest down. She is no hypocrite; she is perfectly sincere; but her deepest nature is unawakened, undeveloped. She knows no more, no, nor as much, as you now do, of the latent strength, fire, and cruelty of those passions which opposition might provoke. There she lay, as unconscious of the seeds of selfishness and tyranny as Nero was, when, at seventeen years of age, he burst into tears at signing the first death-warrant. Awful spirits sleep in the vasty depths of our souls—awful in goodness or in evil—and vicissitudes are the Glendowers that can call them forth. There she lies, all unconscious of the coming struggle, "a perfect form in perfect rest." A rich dress of light material, yet dark and brilliant colours, flows gracefully around her beautiful figure. She reclines upon a crimson silken couch, her face slightly turned downwards, her head supported by her hand, and her eyes fixed upon a book that lies open upon the downy pillow; a profusion of smooth,

shining, amber-hued ringlets droop around her graceful Grecian head; her eyebrows are much darker, and are delicately pencilled; her eyelashes are also dark and long, and shade large eyes of the deepest blue; her complexion is very rich, of a clear warm brown, deepening into a crimson blush upon cheeks and lips the brighter and warmer now that the book beneath her eyes absorbs her quite. The light through the golden-hued drapery of the window pours a warm, subdued effulgence over the whole picture. On a cushion below her couch sits a little quadroon girl, of perfect beauty, fanning her mistress with a fan of ostrich plumes; and while she sways the graceful feathers to and fro, her dark eyes, full of affection and innocent admiration, are fixed upon the beautiful epicurienne.

When the rising of the evening breeze began to swell the gold-hued curtains, Oriole dropped her fan, but continued to sit and watch lovingly the features of her lady. When the purple shades of evening began to fall around, Oriole arose softly, and drew back the curtains on their golden wires, to let in more light and air, revealing the terrace of roses, the lawn and its groves and reservoirs, and the lovely rose and amber-clouded Pearl, rolling on between its banks of undulating light and shade; and giving to view, besides, the figure of a lady standing upon the terrace of roses, and who immediately advanced smiling, and threw in a shower of rose-leaves over the recumbent reader, exclaiming—

"Will that wake you? *Mon Dieu!* What is it you are idling over? The breeze is up, and playing a prelude through the pine tops and cane-brakes, and

the birds are about to break forth in their evening song. Will you come out?"

The speaker was a lady of about twenty-five years of age, of petite form, delicate features, dark and brilliant complexion, and sprightly countenance, which owed its fascination to dazzling little teeth, and ripe lips bowed with archness, great sparkling black eyes full of mischief, and jetty ringlets in whose very intricacies seemed to lurk a thousand innocent conspiracies. She was dressed in mourning, if that dress could be called mourning which consisted of a fine light black tissue over black silk, and a number of jet bracelets set in gold, that adorned the whitest, prettiest arms in the world, and a jet necklace that set off the whiteness of the prettiest throat and bosom. Mrs. Vivian, of New Orleans—Annette Valeria Vivian—spirituelle Valerie—piquant Nan!—the widow of a wealthy merchant, a distant relative of Mrs. Sutherland by her mother's side, and now with her step-daughter on a visit of some weeks here at "Cashmere."

"*Ciel!* then do you hear me? What volume of birds or flowers do you prefer to the living birds and flowers out here? What *book* (pardieu!) of poetry do you like better than the gorgeous pastoral poem spread around us? *Mon Dieu!* she does not hear me yet! India, I say!" exclaimed the impatient little beauty, throwing in another shower of rose petals.

Miss Sutherland, languid and smiling, rose from her recumbent posture, and handed her the volume.

"Pope! by all that is solemnly in earnest! Pope's Essay on Man, by all that is grave, serious and awful! Why, I thought at the very worst it was some Flora's

Annual, or Gems of the Aviary, or some other of the embossed and gilded trifles that litter your rooms. But Pope's Essay on Man! Why, I should as soon have expected to find you studying a work on tanning and currying!"

"Oh, hush, you tease! And tell me what these lines mean. I have been studying them for the last half hour, and can't make them out."

"*You* studying! Ha! ha! ha! You doing anything! By the way, I have been trying to discover what office I hold near the person of our Queen. I have just this instant found out that I am thinker in ordinary to her gracious majesty."

"Well, dear Nan, do credit to your post—think me out these lines," said the beauty, languidly sinking back upon her couch.

"But what lines do you mean?"

"Oriole, show them to her. Oh, never mind, you don't know them. Hand me the book, Nan! Here, here are the lines—now make out a meaning for them, if you can:

> 'And binding nature fast in fate,
> Left free the human will.'"

"Well," said Mrs. Vivian, laughing, "it sounds very like—

> 'And tying Adam hand and foot,
> Bid him get up and walk!'

And it *looks* as if it might have been written by Uncle Billy Bothsides! Ah, by the way, here he comes. Talk of the evil one, and—you know the rest. Ah, I shall be amused to hear his opinion of the sentiment in question. It is just in his way."

I am sure that I shall never be able to do justice to the gentleman that was now seen advancing from the lawn—Mr. William I. Bolling, as he called himself; Billy Bolling, as he was called by his brothers-in-law; Bolling Billy, as called by his boon companions of the bowling alley; Uncle Billy, by the young people; Marse Billy, by the negroes; and Billy Bothsides, by everybody else. He was a short, fat, little gentleman, of about fifty years of age, and clothed in an immaculate suit of white linen, with a fresh broad-brimmed straw hat, which as he walked he carried in one hand, while in the other he flourished out a perfumed linen handkerchief, with which he wiped his face and rubbed his head. His little head was covered with fine light hair, that did not shade, but curled itself tightly off from his round, rosy, good-natured face, full of cheerfulness, candour, and conceit. The damper or the warmer the weather, or the more excited state of Uncle Billy's feelings, then the redder grew his face and the tighter curled off his flaxen hair.

Mr. Bolling was one of those social and domestic ne'er-do-weels of which every large family connection may rue its specimen—one of those idle hangers-on to others, of which almost every southern house does penance with at least one. He was a brother of Mrs. Mark Sutherland, but no credit to his sister or their mutual family; though, to use his own qualifying style, neither was he any dishonour to them. He was a bachelor. He said it was by his own free election that he led a *single* life, though he vowed he very much preferred a *married* life; that nothing could be justly compared to the blessings of celibacy, except the beatitude of matrimony. He compromised with

the deficiency of every other sort of importance by a large surplus of *self*-importance. He valued himself mostly upon what he called his cool blood, clear head, and perfect impartiality of judgment. He was not to be seduced by love or bribed by money to any sort of partisanship. And as there are two sides to most questions under the sun, and as Mr. Bolling would look impartially upon positive and negative at once, so Billy

"Won himself an everlasting name."

He now came up to the bay window, wiping his face, and fanning himself, and saying—

"Good evening, ladies! It is a perfectly delightful evening—though, to be sure, it is insufferably warm."

Mrs. Vivian immediately challenged him with, "Mr. Bolling, we are anxious to know your opinion upon these lines of Pope;" and she read them to him, and put the book in his hands. He took it, and wiped his face, and fanned himself—but these cooling operations seemed to heat him all the more, for his face grew very red and his flaxen hair crisped tightly as he gazed upon the page, and said: "Eh, yes, that's all right—certainly!"

"We believe it right, but what does it mean?"

"Mean! Why, *this* is what it means—

'Binding nature fast in fate,
Left free the human will;'

certainly—yes."

"Please to explain yourself, Mr. Bolling," said the widow, while India gazed on in languid amusement.

Uncle Billy wiped his forehead, and said, "Why

I don't think ladies understand these grave theological matters."

"No, but you can enlighten us, Mr. Bolling."

"You see these lines comprise the profoundest problems of philosophy—so profound as to perplex the understandings of the greatest scholars and philosophers that have ever lived; so profound, in fact, as to be quite unintelligible even to me—yet so simple as to be easily comprehended by the narrowest intellect—so simple as to be clear even to you, or to Fly here."

This was said of a small boy who at that instant appeared with a basket of oranges.

"Fly, do you know what your master William is talking about?"

"Yes, ma'am; politics."

"Exactly," smiled Valeria; "go on, Mr. Bolling."

"*Hem!* Observe, Mrs. Vivian, that there is an analogy all through nature—physical, mental, moral, spiritual."

"Yes. Fly, listen—what is he talking about now?"

"Physic and sparrits, ma'am."

"That is right. Pray go on, Mr. Bolling."

"Yes; permit me to seat myself."

Uncle Billy let himself cautiously down upon the green turf. Valeria gave her hand to India, who stepped out upon the terrace and seated herself. Mrs. Vivian sank down near her. Oriole placed herself by her mistress, with the plume fan. Fly stood a short distance off, with his basket of oranges.

The tall rose trees, blown by the breeze, shed coolness and fragrance over the party. The beautiful variegated lawn, with its groves, ponds, and parterres,

stretched out before them; and below it flowed on, between its banks of purple shadow, the limpid Pearl, with the evening light fast fading from its white bosom.

"Now, then, Mr. Bolling!"

"Now, then, Mrs. Vivian! I said that there was an analogy running through the universe of nature; thus, the centripetal and centrifugal forces, that modify each other's power, and regulate the motions of the planetary systems, correspond exactly to predestination and free will"—

"Do you understand him *now*, Fly?"

"No, ma'am; Marse Billy's too deep for me now."

"And for me too, Fly; put down your basket now, and go, Fly. I dislike to see a poor child tiring himself, first upon one foot, and then upon the other; it puts me ill at ease."

"Yes, go! you sickly little wretch, you! I wonder how you think the ladies like to have such an ugly little attenuated black shrimp as you are about them; and I'm astonished at the gardener for presuming to send you here. Be off with you, and never show your face again," said Master Billy, growing very red in the face with zeal and gallantry.

Little Fly looked first surprised and grieved, and then penitent on the score of his sickness and deformity, and set down his basket and turned to go.

"Please don't scold him, Mr. Bolling; it's not his fault, poor little fellow! It was I who asked Mr. Sutherland to take him from the field and place him in the garden, because it is shadier there, and the work is lighter. Everybody cannot be strong and handsome—can they, Fly?" And the gentle speaker

turned and laid her hand kindly upon the boy's head and smiled encouragingly in his face. The child looked up in grateful affection; and the eyes of all the party were raised to welcome the orphan step-daughter of Mrs. Vivian. She was a fair, pale girl, of a gentle, thoughtful, pensive cast of countenance and style of beauty, with which her plain dress of deep mourning perfectly harmonized.

"Come and sit by me, Rosalie, love," said the widow, making room for the maiden, half embracing her with one arm.

The kind girl put an orange in the boy's hand, and, smiling, motioned him away; and Fly, no longer mortified, but solaced and cheerful, ran off.

"Now proceed, Mr. Bolling. Rosalie, dove, Mr. Bolling is explaining to us the two great motive powers of the universe; the centripetal, which he says means the law of the Lord, and the centrifugal, which he says means the temptation of the demon. And we, my love, are the planetary bodies, kept from extremes of good and evil by the opposite action of these two forces. Is not this it, Mr. Bolling?"

"No, madam; no! no! no! Lord! Lord! Thus it is to expose one's theories, especially to Mrs. Vivian there, who would wrest the plainest text of Scripture to her own perdition. No, ma'am; I was about to say that the overruling will of Providence and the free agency of man were the two great motive powers of the moral universe—the human free will, being the great inward and impulsive force, is the centrifugal or flying-off power, and the government of God the centripetal or constraining power; that in the moral world these two great forces modify each other's action, just

as their prototypes do in the material world--keeping all in healthful action. Do you understand me?"

"Do you understand *yourself*, Mr. Bolling?"

"Ah, I see you don't—women seldom do!" said Uncle Billy, wiping his forehead. "Thus, then, were man without free will—without the power of working out his own salvation, or the privilege of sending himself to perdition, if he desired it—he would no longer be a moral agent, and, were he never so sinless, he would be at the best only a sinless puppet, an automaton, and God's creation would be a dumb show. And, on the other hand, were human free will left without restraint of the Lord's overruling government, why, man would rush into all sorts of extravagances, become a maniac, and convert God's order into chaos again. But, both these evil extremes being avoided, the Scylla of inert, passive obedience is left upon the right, and the Charybdis of unbridled license on the left, and all goes on well and harmoniously. And now I hope you understand how it is that in 'binding nature fast in fate,' God still left free the human will."

"No, I do not; it seems to me that we are free agents, or we are *not* free agents—one or the other."

"We're both, I assure you—both. Truth generally lies between extremes. I have known that all my life, and acted upon it. We *are* free agents, and we are *not*—that is to say, we are free agents within a certain limit, and no further. And observe, my dear Mrs. Vivian, and my dear girls! *within that limit we have still room enough to save or to lose our souls!*"

This speech was concluded with so much solemnity of manner, that it imposed a silence on the little

circle, that might have lasted much longer than it did, had Mr. Bolling been disposed to repose on his laurels. He was not.

"Now, are you satisfied, madam?" he inquired of Mrs. Vivian.

The little lady shook her jetty ringlets, and slowly picked her marabout fan to pieces.

"I think mamma wishes to know why these things need be so," said Rosalie.

"My sweet Miss Vivian, little maidens should be seen, and not heard."

"Don't tempt Mr. Bolling beyond his depth, Rosalie," smiled the widow; and *not* suiting the action to the word, she handed Uncle Billy an orange she had just peeled.

The little gentleman received the attention with a deprecating, humble bow, and, to prevent inconvenient questioning, turned to Miss Sutherland, and inquired when she had heard from her cousin Mark, winking with what he supposed to be a killing leer.

The beauty slightly raised her lip and arched her brows, but deigned no other answer.

"Oh, she has not heard from Mr. Sutherland for three whole days, and his last letter was but twelve pages long. I am afraid he is fickle, like the rest. I should not wonder if he were now the humble servant of some northern blue ——. It is written, 'put not your trust in'—pantaloons. Men are so uncertain," said Valeria.

"Men are so uncertain! What men? Uncertain in what respect?"

"All men are uncertain, in all things!"

"Humph, that is a totally unfounded calumny on

our sex; though, to be candid, I acknowledge it is but too true of all men, without a single exception—save myself!"

"You? Oh, dear, oh! Ha! ha! ha! *You!*"

"Yes, me! In what did you ever find me uncertain?"

"In what? Oh, heavens! he asks in what! Why, in *all things*—mental, moral, and physical! In religion, politics, and morality! In friendship, love, and truth! In war, courtship, and money! In one word, you are a thorough, essential, organic uncertainty. Other people are uncertain—you are uncertainty. I think, in the day of general doom, you will find yourself—nothing in nowhere!"

Uncle Billy turned away from this unmerciful philippic, and again asked Miss Sutherland if she had lately heard from her cousin.

"I have not heard from him for two weeks," replied the young lady, in a low voice, and without raising her eyes.

"Nan, what would you give me for a letter?" inquired Mr. Bolling, rolling his little blue eyes merrily, as he drew one from his pocket and laid it before her.

"Oh, Mr. Bolling! have you had this letter all this time, and detained it from me?" said the beauty, reproachfully, as she took it, and, excusing herself, withdrew into the house to peruse it.

"Come, Rosalie, this night air is deadly to you, my child."

"Oh, mamma, see, the full moon is just rising over those purple hills. I only want to see it reflected in the river, and then I will come."

"Are you moon-struck, then, Rosalie? Come in;

you can safely view the scene from the house. Besides, coffee is about to be served."

And the lady gave her hand to her step-daughter and assisted her to arise, and then tenderly drawing the girl's arm within her own, turned to lead her into the house. And Mr. Bolling lifted himself up, and picking up his straw hat, said—

"And I must go down to the cotton-mills, and make Clement Sutherland come home to his supper. Heigh-ho! it's an incontrovertible fact, that if I did not walk after that man and take care of him, he'd kill himself in the pursuit of gain in one month. Everything is forgotten—mental culture and bodily comfort. I have to bully him to his breakfast, and dragoon him to his dinner, and scare him to his supper. If things go on in this way, I shall have to cut up his food and place it to his lips. He is growing to be a monomaniac on the subject of money-getting. He is as thin as a whipping-post, and about as enlivening to look upon. He looks like a weasel in the winter time, all skin and hair, and cunning and care! He looks as if he felt poor in the midst of all his possessions, and I suppose he really does; while here am I, without a sous, cent, markee, happy as a king, and much more at leisure; eating hearty, and sleeping sound, and growing fat; 'having nothing, yet possessing all things,' according to Scripture, and without a care in life, except to keep Clement from sharing the fate of Midas, and starving in the midst of gold. And, by-the-by, *that* is another heathen myth, with an eternal, awful truth wrapped up in it. Heigh-ho! Well, here's to bring him home to his supper. And a hot time I shall have of it, between him and the in-

fernal machinery! I shall not get the thunder of the mills out of my ears, or the shower of cotton-lint out of my eyes, nose, and throat, the whole night! Oriole, is that you? Do you go and tell the housekeeper, child, to have something comforting prepared for your poor master. He's had nothing since breakfast; I couldn't find him at dinner-time. He was gone, devil knows where, to inspect, devil knows what! He is the only southerner I ever *did* know to give himself up so entirely to the worship of Mammon, and the only one, I hope, I ever shall know!"

And, having eased his mind by this fit of grumbling, Uncle Billy waddled off on his benevolent errand to the mills.

In the meantime Mrs. Vivian conducted her stepdaughter into the drawing-room communicating with Miss Sutherland's boudoir. The room was now brilliantly lighted up, but vacant of the family. The broad doors were slidden back into the walls, revealing the boudoir in its rich-toned gloom and gleam of purple and gold; and India herself, standing in the midst, quite lost in thought, with one jewelled hand pressing back the amber ringlets from her forehead, and the other hanging down by her side, clasping the letter of Mr. Sutherland. So deeply troubled and perplexed was her look, that Valeria impulsively sprang to her side, exclaiming, "What grieves you, my dearest India? No evil news, I trust?"

Miss Sutherland burst into tears, and silently handed her the letter. But before Valeria had turned it about and found the commencement, India recovered her voice, and said in broken accents, "You know how closely I have kept his correspondence for the last

few weeks. Alas! I have had reason for it, Valeria. Little do his uncles imagine what detains him at the North. But he conceals nothing from me, and he lays the heavy responsibility of his confidence upon me. For a month past it has been an onerous burden to my conscience."

"My love! what has he been doing there? Has he killed his man in a duel, and got himself in trouble, in that frozen stiff North, where a gentleman cannot even shoot his rival in a generous quarrel, without being put to the inconvenience of a judicial investigation? I really do suppose that is it, now!"

"Oh, no! Would it were only that! That were no dishonour, at least. Oh, no! It is as much worse as it could possibly be!"

"I cannot believe that Mr. Sutherland would do aught unworthy of a man and a gentleman."

"Woe to my lips that they should utter the charge. But read his letter, Valeria, and advise me, for I am deeply distressed," said Miss Sutherland; and she threw herself back into a cushioned chair, and bowed her face upon her hands, until all the amber ringlets drooped and veiled them.

Valeria ran her eyes quickly over the letter, and then she threw herself into a chair—but it was to laugh. Miss Sutherland raised her head in silent surprise and displeasure. But still Valeria laughed, till the tears ran down her cheeks, holding up one hand in speechless deprecation, to implore forgiveness for a mirth impossible to restrain. When she found her voice—"Why, my dear, unsophisticated girl, there is nothing except a great deal of food for laughter in all this! He has been in New York at the height of

the annual fever, and has caught it! He has been bit by a raging reformer, and gone rabid! Not the first hot-headed young southerner sent to a northern college who has fallen into the same series of fevers. But they all come safely through it! When they find out that to free their slaves means just to empty their pockets, and go to work with their own hands or brains, you have no idea how refrigerating the effect. Don't fear for Mr. Sutherland. He will be brought beautifully out of it! Only note it! he will never send a son of his to be educated at a northern college. Come, cheer up, my love, and never mind my laughing. Really it is legitimate food for laughter! Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!"

"Oh, don't! Only think of it, even at its best! Here, for weeks past, he has been mingling freely with these sort of persons—mixing in their assemblies, where people of all colours and castes meet on equal terms, in a stifling crowd—oh, Queen of Heaven! it is a ruinous dishonour—an unspeakable insult he has cast upon me, his betrothed!" she exclaimed, rising with all the proud and passionate energy of deep and strong conviction.

And again Mrs. Vivian gave way to a peal of silvery laughter, exclaiming, "Why, you simple maiden! gentlemen *will* do such odd things, because you see they (poets excepted) have no instincts—not even any original ideas of refinement. But be comforted! He comes to us by sea, and will have passed through several hundred miles of salt sea wind before he reaches your fragrant boudoir."

"*Do not* pursue this subject! *Do not*, Valeria! *Do*

not press it upon me so! It wrongs, it injures me—I feel it does!" said India, with energetic earnestness.

"I never saw you so deeply and strongly moved before—nonsense! But indeed I must have my laugh out with somebody! It is, besides, too good to keep—this ludicrous secret! Ah, here comes Mr. Bolling, with Uncle Clement in his wake, no doubt, for he went to fetch him! I must tell Uncle Clement of his son-in-law's conversation or—die.

"Uncle, Uncle Clement! what do you think has happened to Mark? Listen," exclaimed the vivacious lady, running off with the letter. Miss Sutherland sprang and caught her hand, and, pale as death, cried out, "On your *life*, Valeria—on your soul! You do not know my father; he abhors those sects with an exterminating fury of hatred! Give me the letter! Nay, now by your *honour*, Valeria! It was a sacred confidence. Give me the letter!" and she wrested the contended paper away from the giddy, laughing, little lady.

"Hey*day!* What the mischief is all this? A regular romp or wrestle? Let me put down my hat, and I'll stand by and see fair play," exclaimed Mr. Bolling, who had just entered.

Blushing with anger at having suffered herself to be surprised out of her usual repose of manner, Miss Sutherland sat down in silent dignity, while Mrs. Vivian, still laughing, inquired, "Where is uncle?"

"Where? Yes! 'Echo answers where?' He has not been home to breakfast nor dinner, and now I suppose he'll not be here to supper. I went down to the mill to bring him home to supper; he was not there! Guess where he was? Gone over the other

side of the river, to preside at the lynching of an incendiary. Upon my sacred word and honour!" exclaimed Uncle Billy, growing crimson in the face, "the most cruel, unjust, unwarrantable proceeding I ever heard of in all my life; *though*, to be perfectly fair, I must say it serves the fellow exactly right."

"*Apropos—what did I tell you, Valeria?*" said Miss Sutherland, in a low voice.

"And, now, what is this mighty mystery that must be concealed from Clement?"

Mrs. Vivian and Miss Sutherland exchanged glances, and the latter replied: "It is a letter from Mr. Sutherland, sir, that concerns myself alone, and I do not choose to make its contents public, even at the suggestion of my dear esteemed friend here."

"Ah! Umph—hum! Yes! But now, my dear child, let me say one word. Young people are foolish, and need to be counselled by the wisdom of age. Observe, therefore, what I say, and be guided by my advice. There is no circumstance or combination of circumstances whatever, that will justify you in withholding any secret from your father; nevertheless, I am bound to say that nothing under the sun could excuse you in betraying, even to him, the confidence of your betrothed husband. Now, I hope you understand your duty! At least, you have my advice!" said Uncle Billy, wiping his head, after which he placed his handkerchief in his straw hat, seated himself, and put the hat upon the carpet between his feet —all with a look of great self-satisfaction.

"At least the advice is very practical!" said an ironical voice behind him. All turned to see Mr. Sutherland the elder, who had silently entered. He

was of an unusually tall, attenuated form, with a yellow, bilious, cadaverous face, whetted to the keenest edge by care and rapacity, and surrounded by hair and whiskers so long and bristling as to give quite a ferocious aspect to a set of features that without them would have looked merely cunning. He strode into the midst of the circle, and standing before his daughter, demanded in an authoritative tone, "Give me that letter, Miss Sutherland!" She turned deadly pale, but without an instant's hesitation arose to her feet, placed the letter in her bosom, and stood fronting him.

Seeing that the matter was about to take a very serious turn, Mrs. Vivian playfully interfered, by nestling her soft little hand into the great bony one of the planter, and saying, with her bewitching smile, "Ah, then, Mr. Sutherland, let young people alone. Do not rifle a young girl's little mysteries. Remember when you were youthful—it was not so long ago but what you can remember, I am sure," she said with an arch glance. "And when you used to write sweet nonsense to one beautiful Cecile, her mother, how would you have liked it if the practical commercial eyes of good Monsieur Dumoulins had read your letters? Come! give me your arm to supper; we have waited for you half an hour;" and the lively lady slipped her arm into his; and Mr. Sutherland with the very ill grace of a bear led captive, suffered himself to be carried off. Mr. Billy Bolling, with a flourishing bow, gave his hand to Miss Sutherland, and Paul Sutherland led Rosalie.

The apartment was very pleasant. The inner shutters of wire gauze, that were closed against the mos-

quitoes, did not exclude the fresh and fragrant evening breeze that fanned the room. The elegant tea-table stood in the midst, and the whole was illumined by light subdued through shades of ground glass—not figured—but plain, and diffusing a soft, clear, even radiance. They sat down to the table, and coffee and tea were served by waiters from the sideboard. To dispel the last shades of suspicion and discontent from the mind of Mr. Sutherland, Mrs. Vivian remarked: "We are to have Mr. Mark Sutherland home in a very few days, if I understand aright. *N'est ce pas, chere Indie?*" Miss Sutherland only bowed, and the conversation turned upon their approaching voyage to Europe.

CHAPTER IV.

MRS. SUTHERLAND.

On her cheek the autumn flush
Deeply ripens; such a blush
In the midst of brown was born,
Like red poppies grown with corn.
Round her eyes her tresses lay—
Which are blackest, none can say;
But long lashes veil a light
That had else been all too bright.—*Hood.*

On the opposite side of the Pearl from Cashmere, and a little further down the river, and back from its banks, in a small vale embosomed in hills, was Silentshades, the home of Mark Sutherland. The homestead was the same that had been built by his father, upon first laying out the plantation. The house was very

modest and unpretending—a moderate-sized, oblong building of two stories, painted light brown, with green shutters, and with piazzas surrounding both floors. The house was shaded and darkened by catalpa trees clustering thick about it and overhanging the roof. The pillars of the piazzas were thickly twined with running vines, that, branching and interlacing, formed a beautiful *treillage* of foliage and flowers. Doors from this piazza admitted directly into the rooms upon the first floor. In the right-hand front room, opening upon two sides into the piazza, upon the next evening after the events related in the last chapter, sat Mrs. Sutherland. She was a medium-sized, full-formed brunette, of perhaps forty years of age; yet so perfect was her physical organization, and so well regulated her moral nature, so even, calm, and blameless had been the tenor of her life, that now, she was a specimen—not, certainly, of youthful beauty—but of a rarer kind of matured and perfected matronly beauty. Her style was noble and simple. Her rich, abundant hair of glossy black, with purplish light, was plainly divided above a broad forehead, and laying down upon the temples in heavy looped bands, was carried behind and twisted into a thick, rich coil, and wound round and round into a large knot fastened with pins; there were no combs, curls, ribbons, or fripperies of any sort, to mar the simple, grand beauty of the head. The eyebrows were black and lightly arched; the eyes large, dark, and very quiet, under their curtain of long black lashes; the nose perfectly straight; and the cheeks, lips, and chin, perfectly beautiful in contour. Her complexion was of that mellow, Italian brown, flushing and deepening in the cheeks to a carnation richness.

(Uncle Billy, who sincerely admired his sister, always said that her complexion ever reminded him of the bloom on a ripe, luscious peach.) Her dress was very simple—a black silk with a delicate lace collar pinned with a small diamond brooch. She sat in an easy chair, reading a letter; and as she read and turned the leaves a quiet smile would just dawn and play on her lips. By her side was a stand with an open book, a workbox, and a little silver hand-bell. At last, without removing her eyes from the letter, she smilingly extended her hand, and rang the little bell. A servant entered, and still without withdrawing her eyes from the fascinating letter, she said:

"Send Mrs. Jolly to me, William."

The man withdrew with a bow, and the housekeeper entered, and awaited the commands of the lady.

Slowly and smilingly folding up the letter, she said, "Mr. Sutherland is coming home this evening. He brings a friend, a young gentleman, with him. I wish you to have their chambers prepared; and do remember to close the wire-gauze blinds, and burn catalpa leaves in the rooms, to destroy any mosquitoes that may remain."

"And at what time shall I order supper, madam?"

"Ah, yes—it will be necessary to put it back two or three hours. You must judge of that. Mr. Sutherland may arrive at any time between this and ten o'clock."

The housekeeper left the room, and the lady sank into her chair again, to re-peruse her letter, smiling and murmuring to herself, half aloud—"Dear boy! dearest Mark! Sure no mother ever had a son like

mine. Comes to *me* first—comes to *me* before hastening to see his lady-love—his adored India. Dearest Mark—but his devotion shall be rewarded. He shall find his India here." And she went to a writing-desk, took paper, and pen, and ink, and wrote the following note:

SILENTSHADES, *June*, 184–.

DEAR INDIA: My dear niece, but dearer daughter, just get into your carriage, and come to me, and do not pause to wonder why I ask you. It is late, I know, but the moon shines brightly, and the roads are good—your driver is careful, and the distance is short. More than all, dear daughter, I consider your coming very important. So hasten, darling, to

Your affectionate aunt and mother,

HELEN B. SUTHERLAND.

Having sealed this letter, the lady rang the bell and gave it in charge of a footman, urging dispatch.

Soon a waiter entered, and lighted up the rooms; and he had scarcely closed the blinds and withdrawn, before the sound of carriage-wheels was heard approaching, and the lady hastened out into the hall. The carriage paused before the door, and in an instant after, Mark Sutherland had alighted, and was clasped to the bosom of his mother.

"Oh, my dear Mark! I am so overjoyed to have you again!"

"Dear mother, I am so proud and happy to find you looking so well! Permit me to present my friend—Mr. Lincoln Lauderdale—Mrs. Sutherland."

A low bow from the gentleman, and a deep courtesy

from the lady, and then smilingly throwing off her habitual reserve, Mrs. Sutherland offered her hand, saying—

"I am very glad to see you, Mr. Lauderdale. You are not a stranger, I assure you. My son has taught me to esteem you, and desire your friendship. Will you enter now?"

And with another smile she gave her hand to her guest, and permitted him to lead her into the drawing-room.

Mr. Sutherland remained in the hall to give some directions to the grooms, and to order the baggage of his guest to be taken up to his chamber. After which he entered the parlour, and laying his hand affectionately upon his friend's shoulder, said—

"My dear Lauderdale, when you feel disposed—or, rather, *if* you feel disposed—to change your dress—Flamingo will show you your apartment. Supper will be ready—Madame, when will supper be ready?"

"My dear Mark, any time—in an hour—an hour and a half"——

"In an hour, Lincoln; that will give you ample time. Flame! lights here. Show Mr. Lauderdale to his room, and consider yourself in his exclusive service while he honours us with his company. I presume you will prefer Flame, my dear Lincoln, because you already know the fellow."

"Thank you, but really I do not need"——

"Oh, say not a word, my dear boy! When you have been subjected to the enervating influence of this climate for a week, you will better know what you need."

By this time Flamingo made his appearance with chamber lamps. Lauderdale arose to follow him. Sutherland accompanied him into the hall.

"My dear Mark," said the former, "did I understand you to say that Mrs. Sutherland was your *own* mother?"

"Undoubtedly my own mother! What a question! Besides, my friend, pardon me! but really, where are your eyes? We are said to be the image of each other!"

"Well, now, although both of you are dark, with high complexions, I cannot see the likeness, to save my soul," said Lauderdale, mischievously; then adding, "she is very handsome."

"*Is she not!*" echoed Sutherland, with enthusiasm, and accompanying Lauderdale up stairs—"the handsomest woman in the world? oh, except *one*. You should see India. And, more than that, she—my mother, I mean—is the most excellent, except—*none*."

"I cannot think that she was so handsome in early youth as she is now."

"Oh, I suppose her youth to her maturity was as the budding to the blooming rose—that is all. Here is your room. Make Flame supply you with anything you may need, that is not at hand; and for your life—nay, *more*, for your good looks, worth more than life—do not open the wire shutters; if you do, you may look in the glass in ten minutes after, and fancy yourself ill with the erysipelas. *Au revoir!* When you are ready, come down."

Mark Sutherland left the room, and instead of seeking his own chamber, to refresh himself with a change

of raiment, he hastened down the stairs, entered the parlour, and once more clasped his mother fervently in his arms, and—

"My dearest mother," and "My dearest Mark," were the words exchanged between them. "But, oh, Mark! how haggard you look, my love! You have been ill, and never let me know it."

"No, upon my honour, mother!"

"Ah, but you are so pale and thin, and your expression is so anxious—what is it? What can it be, Mark?"

"My own dear mother, it is nothing that should give you any uneasiness. I have had a long, fatiguing ride, and—I have not heard from India for more than a week. How is my Pearl?"

"Ah, rogue! a lover's anxiety. Is that the cause of those haggard looks? And yet, to come to me first! Dear Mark! But I have anticipated all your wishes. Your India will be here to meet you—I am expecting her every moment. Hark! there are her carriage-wheels!" said the lady, going to the window; then hurrying back, she exclaimed, "*Peste!* she has some one with her—that lively little Mrs. Vivian, I suppose. Listen, Mark! I will carry her off to a dressing-room, and leave you to meet India. She does not know that you are here."

And Mrs. Sutherland went to the hall door, which she reached just as Mrs. Vivian, who was the first to alight, entered.

"Ah, how do you do, Mrs. Vivian? I am very glad to see you! Come, come into my room."

"Oh, but stop—let us wait for India!"

"By no means, my dear. *Mark* will wait for her."

"*A-h-h-h!* *He* has come!"

"Certainly," said the lady, carrying off her captive.

India sauntered languidly up the door-stairs. Mark sprang forward to meet her. She started—paled—reeled—might have fallen, but he caught her to his bosom, murmuring deeply, earnestly, "*India! my India!*"

For a moment she had nearly swooned with surprise and joy, but in the next instant she recovered, and deeply blushing, withdrew herself from him, saying, "I did not know that you were here."

"I have only this instant arrived," he replied. "My dear, beautiful India! to see you, it is unspeakable happiness."

And he would have clasped her form again, but with flushed cheek she glided out of his arms and entered the parlour. He followed her, placed an easy chair, seated her on it, rolled a cushion to her feet, untied and removed her bonnet, lifted the mass of shining amber ringlets and pressed them to his face, and then would have sunk down upon the cushion at her feet—there to sit and worship with his eyes her peerless beauty, only the sound of light footsteps and silvery laughter arrested the folly.

It was Valeria, who, chatting and laughing with her usual gaiety, entered, accompanied by Mrs. Sutherland. Their entrance was soon followed by that of Mr. Lauderdale, who was immediately presented to Mrs. Vivian and Miss Sutherland.

Supper was next announced, and the party left the drawing-room. After supper, the evening was spent in music, conversation, and cards. A storm arising, detained the ladies all night. After the party had

separated, each to seek his or her own apartment, Sutherland stopped for an instant in Lauderdale's room to ask, "Well, what do you think of her, Lincoln?"

"She is perfectly beautiful."

"Is she not?"

"There is positively nothing possible to be added to her beauty!"

"Ah, did I not tell you so?"

"She has taken me completely captive."

"The deuce! I did not require you to be taken captive."

"If I were only in a condition to seek the lady's love—"

"Humph! What would you do, then?"

"Lose no time in suing for it."

"The demon you wouldn't! That is extremely cool, upon my sacred word and honour!"

"Such glorious black eyes!"

"They are not black, mine honest friend, but blue —celestial blue."

"Blue, are they? I thought they were black; but, in truth, one cannot follow their quickly-changing light and shade to find the hue, they scintillate and flash so."

"Scintillate and flash! Why, they are calm and steady as stars. What the deuce are her eyes to you?"

"And then her magnificent black hair!"

"Black! you are mad! Hers is bronze in the shade, and golden in the sunlight. D——l fly away with you!" the latter clause under his breath.

"I swear her hair is superb black!"

"Who are you talking about?"

"Who—who but charming Mrs. Vivian!"

"Cousin Valeria! Oh-h-h-h! ha! ha! ha! And *I* was speaking of India! So you think Mrs. Vivian good-looking?"

"Good-looking—divine."

"I thought no one in his senses could apply that term to any woman but Miss Sutherland."

"Who—the red-haired young lady?"

"*Red-haired!*" burst out the voice of Sutherland, in indignant astonishment; then reining in his anger with a strong hand, he added, "Lincoln, you are my friend, but there are some provocations"—

"Miss Sutherland is *graceful*," said Lauderdale, with a quiet smile.

"Tah-tah-tah, with your faint praises; good-night."

"Now, here is a reasonable man! When he thought me praising his love with great fervour, he was so jealous as to feel like running me through the heart; and now that he finds me very moderate in my admiration of his idol, he is angry enough to sweep my head off at a blow," said Lauderdale, laughing.

"Good-night!" said Sutherland, to cover his confusion.

"Stay, I can't let you go so; your lady-love is *really* lovely enough to turn all the heads and break all the hearts that approach her. But she has not disturbed the healthful action of mine—will that content you?"

"Yes, because I know it is true—especially the first part of it. Good-night."

"Good-night."

And the friends separated.

"And is this *all* you have to say in support of your project, Mark?"

"Not all, my dear mother."

The lady applied her handkerchief to her eyes quietly, almost stealthily; her face was pale and sorrowful; she seemed to restrain herself steadily, as though she thought the betrayal of strong emotion unbecoming to a woman of her age and station. Her son had just revealed to her his purpose of emancipating all the negroes upon his plantation and sending them to Liberia, with his reasons for so doing. The scene took place very early in the morning after his arrival. It was in her dressing-room. Before any of their guests had arisen, they were up, and she had called him, as he passed her door. They sat now at the open window that looked out upon the beautiful valley of the Pearl, with its groves and fields and streams all fresh and resplendent in the light of the newly-risen sun. The mother sighed deeply as she withdrew her glance from the gladdening scene, and fixed it upon the face of her son.

"And so, Mark, this is the cause of your ill and anxious looks?"

"Yes, mother; I will not deny to you that it has cost me a very severe struggle; and perhaps you see some of its effects."

"Yes, *some* of them, Mark—alas! not *all*," said the lady, in a low, faint voice.

If a little while before she had restrained unmeet energy of expression in the strong emotion she had felt, now all power as well as all will seemed to forsake her. She sat silent, with her hands folded and her

eyes fixed upon them. Mr. Sutherland watched her anxiously.

"My dear madam, I have pained you."

"I am a widow, Mark, and have no child but you"—

"*Mother*"——

"It is a sorrowful time for the mother, Mark, when the boy she has nursed and brought up to man's estate turns upon her in her weakness, arrayed in all the strength and power of manhood."

"My dearest *mother*"——

"Your father, Mark, never caused me a tear or a sigh in his life."

"God bless his memory for that."

"He trusted so in your affection for me, Mark—*and so did I*—that he left me totally dependent upon you"——

"My dearest mother, your comfort and convenience shall be my first object in life. Not even India, my loved India, shall cause me to forget all I owe to you."

"Words, Mark! words! This project of yours will reduce me to beggary!"

"No, dear madam, it shall not. Me it will reduce to—my own exertions for a livelihood, but not you. When all my slaves are freed, and on their way to Africa at my cost, there will still remain, from the sale of the land, some thirty thousand dollars. That money, mother, with the homestead here, I intend to settle upon yourself"——

"Oh, my son! you break my heart. Do you think, then, that I will suffer you to beggar yourself to enrich me? No, dear Mark; no! Since you do not forget me—since you remember me with affectionate interest, it is sufficient. If I reproached you just now,

it was only because I felt as if you did not care for me; and that is a sorrowful feeling in a parent, Mark."

"I never for one instant forgot your interests, dear mother. How could I? I had settled the plan I have named to you, in my mind, before I left the North."

"I cannot bear the name of that quarter of our country! the word strikes like a bullet, Mark!" exclaimed the lady, with an impulsive start, and shrunk as if indeed she were shot.

Mr. Sutherland looked down, mortified and troubled.

"And as for this plan, Mark," proceeded the lady, "it must not be carried out. Under no circumstances can I consent that you beggar yourself for me."

"Dearest mother, I do not think it possible for mere loss of fortune to beggar a man of good health and good morals. I shall go to the West. It is a broad field for enterprise. I studied law for my amusement, having had a strong natural attraction for it. I shall commence the practice of that profession in some western village, and grow up with the town. I shall succeed. Indeed, methinks new life and energy runs through my veins and fires my heart at the very thought of difficulties to meet and overcome!" said Mr. Sutherland, smiling gaily, stretching his arms and rubbing his hands together

"Alas! you do not know what you are talking about, Mark! What a project! And your approaching marriage with India—is it possible in this connexion that you do not think of that?"

"Not think of that!" echoed Mr. Sutherland, as a strange, beautiful smile flitted over his face. "Mother, I dreaded this interview with you; but I looked

forward to an explanation with my loved India as the first reward of right-doing—if what I have done is right—a foretaste of what the rewards of Heaven will be! My India! I know her generosity, her magnanimity, her high-souled enthusiasm! How many times I have experienced it! How many times, when reading with her of some high heroism of the olden time, when there were heroes, have I seen her pause, her bosom heave, her cheek flush, her eye kindle and gaze upon me, expressing unspeakable admiration of those lofty deeds! And now, when in her own life an opportunity occurs of practising those very same great virtues—when she has the power, by sacrificing wealth and luxury, to bless hundreds of her fellow-beings, and not them only, but their children and children's children—do I not know that high-souled girl will aspire to do it! Madam, it is a majestic, a godlike power, to be able to confer the blessing of liberty and education upon hundreds of beings and their descendants to numberless generations—a power I would not *now* exchange for a small limited monarchy. And, oh! do I not know that my India—soul of my soul!—will think as I do—will feel as I do? Nay, do I not know that she will go beyond me? Mother, when I have doubted, or struggled against my better feelings, I have seen as in a vision, her eyes suffused with generous tears, her cheek kindle, and felt the warm pressure of her hand encouraging, inspiring me!"

"Oh, Mark! Mark! romance! nothing more. And even should India approve your project, which I think quite impossible, what is your further purpose? To leave her here, bound by an engagement, to wear out

her youth in expectation of your making a fortune and coming back to claim her hand?"

"No, dearest mother, that were too hard a trial to both of us. No, I mean to take her with me to the West, to encourage and assist me while I make her as happy as I possibly can!"

Here, again, the lady's feelings arose to so high a pitch of excitement that she had to put a violent constraint upon herself, while she answered quietly, "And how do you think Miss Sutherland will like to lay aside all the prestige of her rank, and wealth, and bridehood, and, instead of a splendid wedding, and a bridal tour, and a voyage to Europe, take an ignominious departure from her father's house, for a life of poverty and privation in the West?"

"I told you, dearest mother, that my India was of a highly heroic nature. That does not mean wedded to ease and worldly honour; indeed, it more frequently means the loss of both."

"And so you deliberately mean to take that girl—if she will go with you—to some miserable western village, to endure all the miseries of poverty?"

"What miseries of poverty, dearest mother? If you were a European talking of Europeans, I could understand your prudence; but you are an American matron talking to an American youth, and advising him not to marry the girl he loves if he has not a fortune to support her. It seems to me, mother, that in *our* country the man or woman who refuses to marry for such a reason, wants faith, love, hope, enterprise, energy, and every thing they ought to have; and under such circumstances, it seems but right, indeed, that they should stay single."

"You do not know what you are talking about. But should India be so imprudent, do you think her father will consent to such a mad project?"

"His consent to our union was long ago obtained; and if, under present circumstances, he should withdraw it—India is of age, you know!"

"Mark, tell me if you have ever had any experimental knowledge of *want?*" The young man looked up with a questioning glance. "Because if you do not know, I can tell you, Mark. I know how young people think of poverty, and talk of poverty, when any strong motive like love, or any other passion, urges them to embrace it; and people who are older, and should know better, talk pretty much in the same way. They will tell you that poverty deprives you of none of the real essential blessings of life; that the riches of nature and of nature's God are free alike to the rich and the poor; that the blessings of health, of well-doing, of sunshine, and the face of nature, are open alike to both. It is so with the rich, doubtless, and it may be so with the poor who were born in this poverty; but to the well-born and well-educated, to the refined and intellectual, poverty is a dreadful, dreadful thing. It is not only to suffer the privation of proper and sufficient food, and comfortable clothing, and dwelling—it is to be shut out of all enjoyment of the blessings of nature and of society, and at the same time be exposed to all the evils that nature and society can inflict upon you. You have no leisure, or if you have, you have no respectable clothing, in which to go out and take the air, and enjoy the genial sunshine of pleasant days, on the one hand; and on the other, no adequate protection against the freezing

cold of winter, and no escape from the burning heat of summer. And for society, pride will not permit you to seek the company of your sometime peers, and delicacy restrains you from the coarse association around you. To us, Mark, poverty would be the privation of every enjoyment. To be poor, were to be maimed, blind, ill, and imprisoned, at once!"

"Dear mother, *you* are a lady—*I*, a man! And loss of fortune has now no terrors for me; and birth and education, so far from rendering me more helpless. shall make me stronger to conquer my difficulties. I have no fear of wanting any of the comforts of life from the very onset. And as for being shut out, or rather shut *in*, from nature—mother, do you think I shall be? Do you think I shall keep away from nature because I cannot call on her in a coach, with a groom on horseback to take in my card? No, indeed. On the contrary, I purpose to live with nature. She's an old intimate friend of mine, and no summer friend either—nor shall I be a summer friend of hers, and shrink from her boisterous winds and rattling sleet. And as for society, mother—oh, let me quote to you the words of Dr. Channing, whose lips, indeed, seemed touched with fire: 'No matter though the prosperous of my own time will not enter my obscure dwelling. If the Sacred Writers will enter and take up their abode under my roof, if Milton will cross my threshold to sing to me of paradise, and Shakspeare to open to me the worlds of imagination and the workings of the human heart, and Franklin to enrich me with his practical wisdom, I shall not pine for want of intellectual companionship.' So, dearest mother, with industry that will procure me all the

necessaries of life, health that will enable me to enjoy or endure nature in all her moods, and a mind dependent on itself for its enjoyment, what have I to dread from loss of fortune?"

"It may be very well for *you*, at least tolerable; but for *India!* You would not bring Miss Sutherland down to such a state?"

Mark paused, and then answered—

"Yes, mother, yes; if the only other alternative is to be a separation of many years, I would bring India down to this state."

"Oh, Mark! that is very, very selfish!"

"I do not think so, madam."

"Mark! Just now, when I told you of the nameless miseries of the well-born poor, you did not deny them, but said, 'Mother, *you* are a lady—*I*, a man.' Mark! out of your own mouth I will condemn you. India—Miss Sutherland—'is a *lady*,' Mark! Are you not selfish?"

"No, mother! not if India feels as I do—as I know she does; not if our separation would be to her, as it would be to me, a greater evil than all the early struggles our union may bring upon us."

"My dear son, your sanguine confidence gives me deep pain. Dear Mark, be not too sure! Not for worlds would I speak a word against your India. Nor do I know that, under her circumstances, I speak much evil of her when I say that she is haughty, self-willed, indolent, and fastidious! But are those the elements of self-sacrifice?"

"Mother, I would not hear another soul breathe aught against India but you; but to answer your question—and granting, what I am unwilling to

grant, that these faults of her station may be also hers —affection will conquer them! My *life* upon India's magnanimity!"

Yet, even while he spoke, he became suddenly pale and aghast, as if, for the first time, the possibility that it might be otherwise had struck him.

The lady had been pale and disturbed throughout the interview; and now she rose, and taking his hand, said—

"Mark, they have gone down to breakfast; we must go too. We will speak of this again. Mark, I should be in despair, if I did not hope that circumstances will compel you to abandon this insane purpose. When do you break it to India?"

"This day, mother! You have conjured up a phantom whose presence I would not endure for many hours. It must be exorcised by dear India forthwith."

Mrs. Sutherland had two grounds of hope. The first was, that her son, restored to home associations and influences, might change his views and purposes before they should become known to his uncle. Upon this first hope she founded her purpose of preventing, as long as possible, Mark's intended communication to India. The second ground of hope was, that in the event of Mr. Sutherland's intentions becoming known, the powerful motives that would be brought to bear upon him—the threatened loss of his uncle's favour, and of his promised bride's hand—might irresistibly impel him to renounce his project.

But her present wish was to arrest the disclosure of her son's resolution until she could gain time to use her influence upon him to induce him to abandon

them. These thoughts did not arise in her mind during her interview with Mark, nor until she sat reflecting upon it, after breakfast, in the back parlour. Her visitors, on leaving the table, had retired into the front room.

Her fit of deep thought was interrupted by the entrance of Mrs. Vivian from that front parlour. The "lady gay" came in, trilling a lively opera air. Mrs. Sutherland arose, and took her hand with a very serious manner, saying—

"My dear Valeria, who have you left in the other room?"

"Mark and India," answered the little widow, raising her eyebrows with slight surprise.

"No one else?"

"No—yes—I do not know; I believe there is a waiter, or"—

"My dearest Valeria," said Mrs. Sutherland, drawing her to the opposite extremity of the room, "do me a favour; return to the room, and, not only while you remain here, but after you go back to Cashmere, prevent as long as possible any private conversation between those two young people; interrupt them; follow them; stay with them: circumvent them in every way."

"Helen, you astonish me! *Me* play Madame Detrop, not 'for one night only,' but for a whole season! You positively shock me!" exclaimed Mrs. Vivian, and her *eyes* asked, what *can* you mean?

Mrs. Sutherland answered both words and looks at the same time, by saying, very gravely,—

"Valeria, I ask a very strange favour, and impose upon your friendship the unpleasant alternative of re-

fusing me point blank, or taking upon yourself a most ungracious duty; but, dear Valeria, in this at least the end will justify the means. I do not wish to separate my son and niece, as your eyes seem to say, but *au contraire*, to prevent their separation."

"I do not comprehend."

"I wish to prevent a quarrel. Young people will not quarrel before others, any more than they will make love before them. There is a point of controversy between Mark and India, and I do not wish them to have an opportunity of discussing it until both their heads are cool."

"Ah, I think I know the point of contention," said Valeria, with a bright look of sudden intelligence.

"You?"

"Yes."

And the thoughtless little lady, totally forgetful that the communication had been confidential, imparted to her the contents of Mark's letter to India, and the indignation she had expressed at its contents, and the fear she had betrayed lest her father and uncle should discover her lover's change of sentiments.

Mrs. Sutherland heard the story with a thoughtful brow, and at its close, said—

"And do you not think, Valeria, that the discussion of this subject between them at present would end fatally for our hopes?"

"I do not know, indeed. I cannot estimate the strength of Mr. Sutherland's convictions and purposes."

"But you think that India will never yield to them?"

"Never!"

"And so think I. Yet Mark, dear, deluded child, would stake his soul on what he calls her heroism. Well, Valeria, now will you promise me to prevent an interview as long as you can, to give me an opportunity of trying to bring that poor boy to reason?"

"Ha! ha! ha! It is a thankless task, but I will undertake it. But you must give me an assistant, to relieve me sometimes, and to better insure the success of your enterprise. Confide in Uncle Billy, and let him be on duty while I am off."

"I intend to have a talk with my brother upon the subject, but in the mean time I rely mainly upon you. Promise me again that you will be vigilant."

"As vigilant as I can, Helen; but you know my first duty is to Rosalie, dear child! I reproach myself for having left her last night, but the housekeeper promised that she would sleep in the adjoining room, and watch over her."

"Do you not think that you watch over her too much? Do you not see that she is made too much of a hothouse-plant?"

"Rosalie? What! when even a slight change in the weather, or a draught of air, or a piece of fruit not ripe, or a little too ripe, or some such trifle, is sufficient to make her ill for a week, and to bring her to the brink of the grave? I would give half my fortune to any physician who would"—

The little lady's voice broke down, and her sparkling eyes melted into tears; then she said, in a faltering tone—

"Do you think she will die? or do you think there is a blessed possibility of her health being re stored?"

"That which she never possessed, and therefore never lost, cannot, of course, be *restored.* But I think a different manner of treatment would strengthen the child; for how can you expect her to be strong, confined to hot rooms, and idleness, and super-dainty diet?"

"I am sure I do the very best I can for the dear girl; I take her out twice a day in the carriage; I never suffer her to go alone; she never has a bath until I dip the thermometer into it with my own hands, to regulate the temperature; she never puts on an article of clothing until I have ascertained it to be well aired; and she never even eats an orange until it has first passed through my fingers; and yet, with all my care, she droops and droops"——

"Like an over-nursed exotic. But, dear Valeria, there! There goes Thomas, with a vase of yesterday's flowers, to change them. Hasten in there, dear Valeria, and prevent an eclaircissement, while I speak to my brother."

"Why, is *he* here?"

"Certainly; he came while we were at breakfast, and went up stairs to change his dress. That is the reason I remained in this room, to give him his breakfast."

The flighty little lady, already oblivious of her causes for distress, went singing into the room, just in time to overhear, with her quick ears, Mr. Sutherland say to his betrothed—

"Dear India—(Oh, heavens! here comes that widow

again!)—but I *must* have an uninterrupted talk with you; when and where shall it be?"

"In the library, at twelve. Hush! She's here"——

"So," thought Mrs. Vivian, "I have just got in time enough to hear for myself that my efforts to be useful and impertinent will be totally fruitless."

In the meanwhile Uncle Billy had changed his dress, and had come down in a jacket and trousers of linen, white as "driven snow," and took his seat at the breakfast table. While she waited upon him, Mrs. Sutherland cautiously communicated the news that so burdened her mind. Gradually, as she proceeded, the truth burst with the suddenness of a thunderbolt upon Uncle Billy, who dropped his roll and cup of coffee, turned pale, fell back in his chair, and gasped—"Good gracious!"

"Don't make a noise, brother, if you please. See, James is coming with your eggs; wait until he has withdrawn," said the self-possessed Mrs. Sutherland; and then she directed the servant who came in to set down his salver, and leave the room. When he had gone, she turned again to her brother, and said—

"Yes, this is true, and nothing remains now but to try to overrule his purpose, or at least to gain time."

"I—I am overwhelmed, prostrated, stunned with astonishment; though, to be sure, at my time of life, I am never the least surprised by any thing that happens. They are fools who at fifty wonder at any thing."

Mrs. Sutherland then expressed a wish that her

brother would aid her designs, both by delaying the opportunity of an explanation between the young people, and also by using all his logical powers upon her son, to convert him from his purpose; for, strange as it may seem, Mrs. Sutherland had unbounded faith in Mr. Bolling's polemic abilities. His *soi-disant* impartiality, coolness, and precision of judgment, had really imposed upon her.

Uncle Billy dug both his hands in his pockets, and dropped his rosy chin upon his chest with an attitude and expression of deep cogitation, and his face quite flushed with the heat and burden of his thoughts. At last he said, with an air of great deliberation—

"Hem! In the first place, we must essay every possible means of persuasion and coercion, to move him from his purpose. Yes, persuasion and coercion of every possible kind and degree; for in this case the end justifies the means."

"Yes, my dear brother, I agree with you perfectly; it is just what I said."

"Yes, but at the same time," said Billy Bothsides, shaking his head, and glancing keenly at his sister, with the astute air of one making a very fine distinction—"*at the same time*, we are not to use any undue or unfair influence over the young man."

"Oh, certainly not," said Mrs. Sutherland.

"No, no, I never could consent to *that*, although I would go to any justifiable or even unjustifiable lengths, to cure the boy of his folly. You understand me? You follow out my line of reasoning?"

"Well, no, brother William, I do not, clearly."

"Women seldom do! women seldom do! But never mind! Trust to me! *I'll* bring him round

I—though I confess I do not believe it will be in the power of mortal man to do it," said Mr. Bolling, rising from the table, and sauntering into the front parlour.

He found Mrs. Vivian monopolising the attention of Mr. Sutherland, by making him translate for her a sonnet of Petrarch. As soon as Uncle Billy appeared, to relieve guard, Mrs. Vivian suddenly lost all interest in Italian, dropped her book, and left the room, passing Mrs. Sutherland on her way, to whom she said, laughingly—

"A pretty commencement I have made of it! First, heard myself anathematised for a 'pestilent widow'—next made myself and three other people wretched for an hour—those were, Sutherland, who was dying to speak to India—Lauderdale, who was longing to talk to me—India, who wishes to listen to Sutherland—and last, not least, myself, who was quite willing to hear what Lauderdale had to say."

"Mr. Lauderdale seemed quite—*pleased* with you last night."

"Pleased? Well, I should not be surprised. Perhaps he means to make love to me this morning. If he does not, perhaps—he's only a college boy—I mean to make love to him, *pour se disennuyée*;" and waving her fan playfully, and half curtseying, the trifler glided off.

And soon after she was seen promenading on the piazza with young Lauderdale.

Ennuyée with the *dolce far niente* of the morning, Miss Sutherland ordered her carriage to return home. Uncle Billy begged a seat inside, and Mr. Sutherland

and (at the invitation of the latter) Mr. Lauderdale mounted horses to attend the party.

Their way lay through a beautiful piece of woods, that covered the hill, just rising, and then gradually declining to the river. They crossed by a ferry.

This part of the river, being the head of the bend, resembled a beautiful woodland lake, lying embosomed among its green hills and groves, which were all distinctly reflected in the water, that was flushed with a pale purple light, changing ever into azure or crimson, or fading off into faint beautiful hues of pink or saffron.

"Oh! it is well-named the Pearl—this lovely river—though it might as well be called the Opal," said Billy Bolling, who had a taste for natural beauty.

They were but few minutes in reaching the other bank of the river, and landing at Cashmere.

Arrived at Cashmere, the party passed up the winding road leading through the groves and shrubberies of the lawn, to the foot of the marble steps leading to the rose terrace, and there alighting, passed through the verandah into the house.

Laughingly Mrs. Vivian took immediate possession of Miss Sutherland, and carried her off to seek Rosalie.

Mr. Sutherland, senior, happened to be in the house, and Mark immediately introduced his friend Lauderdale. The old gentleman welcomed the stranger with the stately suavity habitual to men of his day and station; but he received his nephew with an earnestness of affection scarcely restrained by the presence of a third party—pressing his hand with much warmth, and detaining it lingeringly in his clasp.

Mark Sutherland could hardly repress a groan, to think how soon all this must be changed. Nay, more: he even felt a species of compunction for receiving his uncle's kindness under what he felt to be false colours; and he determined, if possible, not to let an hour pass before having a full explanation with him. And so, after the first compliments were over, and when the planter arose and politely excused himself, saying that important business called him over to his new plantation, and expressing a hope that Mr. Lauderdale would consider his house, servants, and stables, entirely at his commands, Mark Sutherland laid his hand solemnly upon his arm, and said—

"My dear uncle, I must have a conversation with you this morning."

"My dear Mark," said the old man, smiling—if it could be called a smile—"I know what you are about to ask, and I answer beforehand, *just as soon as India pleases.* The sooner the better. I speak freely before your friend"—bowing to the latter—"whom, I presume, you have persuaded to do you the honour of attending you upon the occasion. Consult my daughter! You know her will is law in this affair."

"My dear sir, it is upon another subject that I really *must* consult you, at your very earliest convenience," said Mr. Sutherland, with such earnestness of manner as to enforce serious attention.

"Well, sir," said the planter, "to-day you must really excuse me. I have to go over to the new plantation. Stoke, my manager there, thinks that the cotton crop is not in a vigorous state; he fears that it is taking the rot. But, excuse me—young men know little and care less for the anxieties that make their

elders slaves." And, smiling and bowing, the old gentleman withdrew.

And Mark Sutherland, seeing no opportunity of breaking his mind to either father or daughter for the present, invited Lauderdale for a ride over the plantation.

Mr. Sutherland rang, and ordered horses, which were at the door in fifteen minutes, and he and his friend mounted and commenced their ride.

First winding round the shaded path at the foot of the rose terrace, they turned to the left, and entered the grove which surrounded three sides of the back of the house. Half a mile's ride through a narrow, tangled pathway, up which they were obliged to proceed in Indian file, led them to an elevated clearing of about a hundred acres, on which was situated the negro village, called, in plantation parlance, "The Quarters."

"There! what do you think of that?" asked Mark Sutherland, with a slight dash of triumph in his tone, as they drew rein and paused under the shade of the trees at the edge of the grove.

Lauderdale's eyes were roving leisurely and attentively over the woodland village. It was certainly a most lovely scene. The sky above was of the brilliant, intense blue of southern climes; the foliage of the woods around was of the vivid green of early summer. A few large trees were left standing at intervals in the clearing; and under these, and scattered at irregular distances through the area, were the neat white cottages with their red-painted doors. Each cottage had its small vegetable garden, and some few of the better-kept houses had their fruit trees, and even flower

yards. The village was deserted now, except by the children playing at the doors, and the old people left to take care of them. Of these latter, some were seated upon the door-steps, and some were standing leaning over the fence-rails; some were occupied with knitting coarse stockings; and some, mostly men, were smoking their pipes. All the able-bodied men and women were out in the fields.

Lauderdale looked on, first with an expression of surprise and pleasure, but afterwards with a countenance full of thought.

"Well, my friend, how do you like that?" repeated Mr. Sutherland.

"I will give you my opinion more at large, later in the day, my dear Mark," replied Lauderdale; and then he added, "I have been told that you have the best stud and best stables in Mississippi; will you favour me with the sight of those also?"

Mr. Sutherland immediately assented. They turned their horses' heads, and taking another path, rode in a circuit around to the site of the stables, which lay at some distance to the right of the mansion house, and were concealed from the latter by an intervening arm of the grove. The stables were built in the most approved modern style, with much architectural beauty, and possessed every requisite for the health and comfort of the noble animals for whose accommodation they were designed. Here again Lauderdale expressed no opinion, but asked to see—don't start, super-refined reader—the pig pens. Mark, with a queer smile, conducted his guest to the desired premises; and also, without waiting to be solicited, introduced him to the cow pens, the hen house, etc. All these

buildings had been constructed under the direction of a celebrated English rural architect, and of course were fitted with every modern improvement for the well-being of the stock. Still Lauderdale as yet reserved his judgment, while he expressed his thanks to his host for the privilege he had enjoyed. Sutherland mischievously asked him whether he would not also like to see the pigeon boxes before dinner. Lauderdale smilingly declined, and they returned to the house. They alighted from their saddles and threw the reins to the groom, entered the hall, and separated to dress for dinner.

Half an hour after, when they met in the drawing-room, Lauderdale advanced to his host, and said,—

"Sutherland, I must thank you again for the sight of your plantation arrangements! and I must say that *all* your stock—horses, cows, and pigs, and slaves—are probably the best accommodated of any in the state!"

Mark Sutherland, with a flushed brow, turned away. But in an instant, Lauderdale laid his hand upon his arm, and said, with a voice and manner full of affectionate earnestness—

"I mean to say just *this*, dear Mark—that your negro village is comfortable, and even exceedingly beautiful, but that no amount of physical comfort can or *ought* to compensate an immortal being for the loss of liberty!"

The entrance of other members of the family and the speedy announcement of dinner ended this conversation for the present.

Haggard, care-worn, anxious, as he was, the deep, ever-springing fountain of gladness in Mark Suther

land's heart dispersed all his gloom; and, during dinner, when the jest and laugh went round, *he* was as usual the spring of wit and humour to the party.

After dinner, when he was about to seek an interview with his betrothed, Mrs. Vivian forestalled him, by carrying off Miss Sutherland to examine a box of goods, lately arrived from New Orleans for the bride elect. And Mr. Bolling, leaving Sutherland, senior, to entertain the guest, ran his arm through that of Mark, and marched him off in triumph.

"Well, Mark," he said, as soon as he had got him on to the lawn, "I cannot understand it! how a young man of your strength of character, of your firmness—nay, obstinacy; stubbornness—should permit yourself to fall a prey to these adventurers."

"I really do not see how I am their prey, Uncle Billy, or why they should be adventurers."

"Oh, Mark, you are—I mean, dear Mark, you want experience of the world; and no amount of moral or intellectual excellence will stand you in stead for that. Nay, indeed, goodness will only make you the easier victim, and talent the more useful tool to these speculators."

"Uncle, you wrong them! By the honour of my soul, you do! You have never seen or heard but one side of the question, and therefore you are bitterly prejudiced."

"Prejudiced! *Me* prejudiced! when everybody knows that I am the most impartial person in the world! But 'moderation has its martyrs also.'"

"You certainly are prejudiced in this matter; yet how shall I set you right? And why should I be

surprised? Once, there was never such a scoffer as I was."

"Yes, and *that's* just what raises the hair of my head with wonder! Your good-humoured satire and gay indulgence used to please me so much more than your uncle's haughty, scornful, persecuting resentment of these people's affronts. You used to laugh, and say to your uncles, 'Your anger is inadequate to the offence; it is ungenerous. These objects of your displeasure are very harmless enthusiasts.' *And now!* Ah, Mark, I call to mind the poet's line—

'First endure, then pity, then embrace.'

You began by enduring, and you end by embracing their doctrines. Ah, Mark! Mark! Mark! how came it so?"

"Uncle, did you never hear of a gay man or woman of the world—well enough in their way—not sinners above all sinners, but with a certain light, satirical way of treating serious subjects, and a certain good-humoured contempt for those that entertained them—did you never hear an instance of such a man or woman going into a religious meeting to scoff, *but returning home to pray?* Well, very much akin to that was my experience. I went to the convention in New York, just to fulfil a promise made to my friend Lauderdale, and next to have a laugh at them! At the first meeting—well; I am not going to give you a report of it—sufficient is it to tell you that the subject was presented to my mind in a new and startling aspect. I laughed, or rather *tried* to laugh, it off."

"I wish to goodness you had taken it more earn-

estly than to begin with laughing, to end with imitating."

"At the second meeting, there were some still higher, purer souls, and more eloquent and commanding tongues; lips touched with fire, whose words were flame consuming the wrong principle, that shrivelled up before it. But I do not mean to become eloquent myself. This is not the time or place, nor are you the audience. It is enough to say that the speakers in that meeting gave me the heartache and the headache, and I wished in my soul I had never entered their hall. Yet nevertheless a fascination drew me there the third evening. And then, whether 'the master minds' of the cause had said all they had to say for the time, or whether they had not yet arrived upon the scene of action, I really cannot say—(for the room was crowded, and not by friends of the cause, as you will hear, but by conspirators, who had come there to break the meeting up)—but certainly, after one short address of thrilling eloquence and power—during the progress of which I felt myself to be a participant in an injustice, and at the close of which I was ready to make an irrevocable oath to clear my life from the sin—up jumps a fellow, with more zeal than knowledge, and more deviltry, I perfectly believe, than either, and so defames me and my fellow-citizens of the South, and so caricatures us as monsters of atrocity, and so whirrs and rattles whips and chains and gyves about my ears and eyes, that it was the cast of a die whether I should laugh or swear. But before it was decided, a resolution was put and an amendment offered, and two or three people rose, and half a dozen began to speak, and everybody

wanted to talk, and nobody—but me—wanted to hear, and there was a confusion inside and a gathering mob outside, and in an incredibly short time there was a hailstorm of stones, and battered walls, and smashed windows, and the meeting was broken up in a row; and my Celtic blood boiled up and boiled over; and while laying about me valiantly in defence of freedom of speech, *I lost myself*. And when I found myself, I was lying with a broken arm and broken head in the watchhouse!"

"Good gracious, Mark! what a dishonour! What would my sister, what would my niece, say to that?"

"They do not know it, and they need not."

"Well, really, one would have thought that would have cured you!"

"My good uncle, it did—of *indecision*. One is very apt to be confirmed to a cause in which they have suffered somewhat. I lay very ill for two weeks. During that time I was ministered to by some excellent men, and *women* also—persons whose disinterestedness, benevolence, gentleness, and perfect sincerity, gave me such a deep and beautiful impression of the Christian character as I had never received from book or pulpit—persons who had sacrificed fortune, position, friendships—*all*, to a pure but despised cause. It was the silent influence, even more than the spoken words of these, which fixed me forever in my good purpose."

"It may be true, Mark, that there are such, or it may only have seemed so to you. What I know is, that if there are such disinterested souls in the cause, they are, at best, only the instruments with which the

party leaders work for their own individual ends and selfish purposes."

"No, it is not so, nor could it be so; wisdom and goodness could not become the tools of selfishness and worldliness."

"Now, Mark, don't stand there and try to dazzle your old uncle's intellect, by a fine-sounding Joseph Surface sentiment! You must either be a blockhead, or take me for one, when you pretend to tell me that the teachers of that party are not a set of self-seeking agitators, whose motives range from the mere getting of daily bread, up to the getting of political power; and who, if it fell easily in their way, would as willingly reach their ends by entering into the slave trade, as by agitating the question of emancipation."

The hot blood crimsoned Mark Sutherland's brow, and he answered indignantly—

"You speak of that of which you know nothing. You speak of those whose"——

"Ah! *don't* I know nothing?" interrupted Mr. Bolling. "Where is that Mr. Grab, who came down here as a travelling preacher, and took that opportunity (or perhaps he was sent on purpose, and paid to do it) to preach abolition to the poor whites and the blacks, and to do Satan knows what other mischief; and the Lord knows what judgment would have fallen on him from our incensed planters, if he had not been offered an asylum in the house of your cousin, Mrs. Tilden, who, being a sentimental, compassionate young woman, and finding herself the protectress of a pale, persecuted young preacher, began to court him, as widows *will* court; and so, when all her brothers and brothers-in-law came in force to turn him out and

lynch him, they met the pair coming home from the minister's—*married!* The pretty widow, the plantation, and the negroes, had proved most convincing arguments, and had converted him. And now, when he feels it necessary to defend himself from the charge of treachery to his party, he says, 'Oh, the erroneous sentiments of his youth were the effects of ignorance and enthusiasm!' Umph, humph! we all understand that—in his case second thoughts *paid better*."

During this speech, Mark had put down his anger, and now replied, gravely and earnestly—

"Uncle, it is a point that I must meet—this of yours. It has given *me* much, deep pain. But why should it make you scornful and incredulous of the disinterestedness of these reformers, or why should it give me sorrow? We must separate a high and pure cause, and its devoted self-sacrificing supporters, from its few unworthy advocates. Why, uncle, do we reject Christianity because among the Saviour's chosen twelve there was one Judas, who was covetous, and whose covetousness made him sell his master? Or because among His many disciples there were some who followed Him, hoping for high places in the kingdom they supposed Him about to establish on earth? Or, even now, do we all refuse to hear the Gospel preached, because there have been some Averys and Onderdonks in the pulpits? And shall we stop our ears, and close our eyes, and fold our hands before the cause of reform, for the reason that there are some Grabs in the party? Nay, God forbid!"

Mark Sutherland paused as in painful thought some

time, and then, with more than usual emotion, he exclaimed—

"I would to God there were *no* Achans in the camp! For this work, that at the best is apt to arouse so much evil passion—for this work, requiring so much wisdom and goodness to carry it on aright—for this work, more than for all others, should the labourers have clear heads, and clean hands, and pure motives."

Then, after a short pause, addressing his uncle again, and taking his hand, he said—

"Uncle, *I* am about to sacrifice all I have in the world, to principles I have but so lately embraced. Well, sir, believe me, for it is God's holy truth—notwithstanding these Grabs who bring dishonour on their cause, there are hundreds of philanthropists who have sacrificed as much as *I*."

"Indeed, *indeed*, Mark, you are very wrong and foolish to do this thing! Very, *very* foolish and wrong, indeed. *Nevertheless*, I am constrained to say that you are perfectly wise and right in persevering in your duty! *Yes, sir!*" said Mr. Bothsides, wiping his face furiously, and stuffing his white handkerchief back in his pocket. "And now, what do you mean to do further?" he asked.

"I shall go to the West."

"Yes—yes—yes—yes," said Uncle Billy, meditatively; "do so. Go to the West—go to some new place, and grow up with it. It will be the easiest thing on earth for you to rise in the world there, and success in the end is almost certain—*though*—confound it! you will find you'll have to struggle very hard, and be very apt to be disappointed at last. You

have no reason in the world to be the least bit discouraged—*but*—you must not be sanguine—that I can tell you! I make it a rule, without an exception never to give advice, Mark—*notwithstanding*—if you are ever at a loss how to act in an emergency, consult me, Mark—my best counsel is at your service. And I really think that with it you could not possibly go wrong," said Mr. Bolling, drawing his handkerchief from his pocket and wiping his forehead, and replacing it with a look of great self-complacency.

"My dear Uncle Billy," said Mark, with a quiet smile, "believe me, I know how to appreciate your fine, impartial judgment, and feel convinced that I never should come to harm in following your advice."

With this proof of his high-minded nephew's affection and confidence, Mr. Bolling's blue eyes filled with tears, and he seized Mark's hand, and squeezed it, and shook it, crying—

"Deuce fly away with you, Mark! I feel a perfect contempt for your folly and wrong-headedness in this matter—*nevertheless*—I am compelled to admit that I am filled with unmingled admiration for the wisdom and rectitude of your character and conduct! *Yes, sir!*"

This was said with great emphasis, and once more the cambric handkerchief was brought into violent requisition.

An hour after the end of this conversation, Mark Sutherland was seated in the library, impatiently waiting the entrance of his uncle, with whom he had at last succeeded in appointing an interview. He was anxious, restless, and unable to occupy himself with

anything, during the few moments which seemed ages before the planter should enter. He tumbled over the books, rumpled the papers, shifted his position many times, started up and paced the floor, looked out of all the windows in turn, and finally went to the door to listen, and reached it just as it was swung open in his face, and old Clement Sutherland entered. The planter walked to the centre of the room, and threw himself into his leather-covered chair at his writing-table, saying, in a curt voice—

"Well, sir, what is your business with me?"

Startled by the unusual sternness of his manner, Mark Sutherland turned and looked at him inquiringly. The planter's countenance wore an aspect of severity that at once told his nephew that from some cause or by some means he had been led to suspect the nature of the communication the latter was about to make him.

"Will you oblige me, sir, by opening your business at once, as my time is somewhat valuable?" said Clement Sutherland, looking at his watch.

The young man bowed, drew a chair to the opposite side of the table, took a seat, excused himself, and deprecated his uncle's displeasure for the painful subject he was about to introduce.

Here Clement Sutherland waved his hand impatiently, begging that he would cut his introduction as short as possible.

Then the young man commenced to relate the history of his life and experiences for the last preceding three months; he told how he had been induced to attend the colonization meetings, first merely in the spirit of bravado; how, in hearing the subject

freely and ably discussed, the conviction had forced an entrance into his soul.

Here Clement Sutherland wheeled his chair around, so that his back was presented to the light, and his face cast into deep shadow, and from this instant to the end of the conversation, Mark Sutherland could not watch the expression of his countenance to judge his mental comments.

But he went on to relate how long and stoutly he had struggled against this conviction; how at last it had overcome him; how his pride, his selfishness, his interests, his passions, and affections—all had yielded, or must yield in any conflict between them and his sense of duty.

"*Facts, sir! facts!* Let us have no sentiments, no moral or metaphysical disquisitions, but actual facts! What do you intend to do?"

Mark Sutherland answered, calmly—

"To free every negro on my plantation, and at my own expense to send every one, who is willing to go, to Liberia."

A scornful, most insulting laugh, was the only comment of the planter.

"And after freeing them, I must do all in my power to place them in a situation of happier circumstances for their present, and more hopeful probabilities for their future, lives."

The young man here paused, and as the planter did not answer, silence ensued between them for several minutes, during which the latter passed his hand slowly back and forth over his bearded chin. At length Mark Sutherland said, in a troubled voice—

"I do not wish to conceal from you, sir, the fact

that my greatest trial in this affair has been connected with the thought of India."

Again he paused for a reply or comment. But the planter only caressed his bristling chin, while his countenance was inscrutable in the deep shadow.

The youth spoke again:

"It has been a subject of deep regret and anxiety to me, to feel that I can no longer hope to offer India a fortune or a position equal to her just expectations. For myself, I have no doubts or fears for the future. I feel within me a power to struggle and to conquer. I feel assured that within a very few years my position will be a higher one than it is now, or than it would be were I to retain my present wealth. I believe that my India will have no cause to blush for her husband, or you for your son-in-law."

Still the old man did not make a single remark, and so deep remained his face in the shadow, that the youth could not read his thoughts. It was rather trying to continue speaking under these circumstances; but there was no alternative. He concluded by saying—

"Although I have long enjoyed the pleasure of your approbation in my addresses to your daughter, I thought it proper to take the very earliest opportunity of informing you of my purposes, and the consequent change they must make in my fortune and circumstances. And now, sir, I have told you all, and I wait in much anxiety to hear what you have to say."—

"What do you *wish* me to say?" dryly inquired the planter.

"Just what is on your mind, my uncle."

"Humph! this is rather sudden, sir. It is true that a few words dropped by Mr. Bolling, and unexpectedly overheard by myself, in some degree prepared me for the strange communication you have just made. Still, it is sudden, sir! It is sudden! What, may I inquire, did you *expect* me to say? How did you anticipate that I should meet this?"

Mark Sutherland hesitated to reply, but got up and walked the floor in an exceedingly troubled manner.

A strange smile sat upon the face of the planter. At last he said—

"You doubtless, and with much justice, expected me to withdraw my consent to the marriage of yourself and my daughter. Did you not? Reply, if you please."

"Sir—my dear uncle!" said Mark, coming forward again, "I had my doubts and misgivings about that. It would have been unjust to you to have seriously *entertained* them; and it would be unjust to myself to say that I did so."

"You were right, sir!" said the planter, with the same inscrutable smile; "you were right—I shall not interfere. Having once sanctioned your addresses to my daughter, I shall not now oppose them. Miss Sutherland is of age. I refer you solely to her. If, under the new aspect of affairs, she is willing that this engagement between you and herself shall stand, and that the preparations for marriage proceed, I shall throw no obstacles in your way. Nay, further, sir, that in that case, the marriage shall be conducted precisely as, under other circumstances, it was planned—that is, in all things befitting the social position of

myself and my sole daughter. Our interview is at an end, I believe?"

The *words* of Clement Sutherland would have called forth from his nephew the warmest emotions and expressions of gratitude, but that the tone and the smile that accompanied them, more than neutralised their good effect, and sent a pang of terrible foreboding through the heart of the young man.

"Pardon me, sir," he said, laying his hand gently and respectfully upon the arm of his uncle, as the latter was rising to leave the library. "Do I understand you to say that you approve"——

"You will please to understand me to say, sir, that I refer you to my daughter, Miss Sutherland, and that I shall endorse her decision, whatever that may be. Excuse me, sir—good afternoon."

And Clement Sutherland, coldly bowing, left the library.

Mark Sutherland walked up and down the floor in great disturbance of mind, and then at last he seized his hat and hurried from the room, to seek the presence of India.

CHAPTER V.

CHAMBRE DE TOILETTE ET LA TROUSSEAU.

"'Tis a proud chamber and a rich,
Filled with the world's most costly things,
Of precious stones and gold;
Of laces, silks, and jewelry,
And all that's bought and sold."—*Howitt.*

"ROSALIE! what is it you are pouring over, now? Good heaven! Moore's Sacred Melodies! Now, my love, that is not the food for you to be feeding your sick fancies upon! Plague take the books! I could find it in my heart to throw every one I find into the fire! Come, throw aside that *blazée* sentimentalist, and come with me into Miss Sutherland's room, and try to interest yourself a little in healthful external life. Miss Sutherland's boxes have just arrived from Paris, *viâ* New Orleans; they have been carried up into her dressing-room; and by this time, I suppose, the men have opened them, and carried off all the rubbish of nails, and bands, and outside boxes, and we have only to go and help to set the beautiful things at full liberty."

This was addressed by Mrs. Vivian to her step-daughter, when, on entering the chamber of the latter, she found the young invalid reclining upon a couch, and reading, as usual.

The fair girl closed her book, and smiling gently, arose, and passed her arm through that of her step-mother. And they left the chamber, crossed the hall,

opened an opposite door, and entered the dressing-room of Miss Sutherland.

A scene of splendid chaos met their view. Most of the boxes had been unpacked and taken away, and their brilliant contents littered chairs, couches, ottomans, psyches, and even the carpet. And the favoured mistress of all this wealth sat in the midst of the resplendent confusion, with an air of extreme languor and indifference. At her feet sat her beautiful handmaiden, Oriole, with a box of white satin slippers by her side, and her mistress's small foot in her lap, fitting the fairy shoes. By her side stood her woman, Meda, holding a box of white kid gloves, from which she continued to hand out pair after pair to the young lady, who would draw one half upon her fingers, and then draw it off and let it fall, and drop her hand upon her lap with a look of extreme fatigue, as if the exertion had really been too much for her, and say, languidly—

"There, take them away; they are all too large, or too small, or something"——

"Dear India, how can you say that?" said Mrs. Vivian, approaching, and taking up a pair of gloves; "they are all exactly of a size, and all number sixes —your number—and are really beautiful gloves."

"But I'm so tired—it is such a bore. Oriole, cease tormenting my feet, and take away those odious slippers."

"How can you call them odious—the beauties?" said Mrs. Vivian, stooping down, and taking up a pair.

And Oriole herself echoed the question with her

eyes, as she fondled her mistress's beautiful foot, in its case of white satin, soft and light as a snow-flake.

"Oriole, did I not tell you to let my foot alone? Meda, clear away all this chaos from around me. Rosalie, my love, reach me the vinaigrette"——

"Can *I* also do anything to serve you?" asked Mrs. Vivian, mischievously.

"Yes, dear Valeria; just see that they hang the dresses up, and put away the cases and things, while I close my eyes upon this glare, and rest."

Mrs. Vivian arched her eyebrows, and did as she was bid, examining at her leisure the magnificent trousseau, as it was detailed off under her eye into various wardrobes and bureaus. Only once she interrupted the repose of Miss Sutherland, to ask her if the wedding-dress had come.

"Meda, tell Mrs. Vivian about it," said the languid beauty, scarcely lifting her long lashes.

And the waiting-woman respectfully telegraphed the lady, and preceded her into the adjoining chamber, where upon the bed was laid the magnificent bridal costume of white brocaded satin, the superb veil of Honiton lace, and the beautiful chaplet of orange flowers.

Mrs. Vivian beckoned Rosalie, and when the child stood by her side, they examined it together, and the mother tried to make the daughter understand how elegant, how costly, how *recherché* was this costume.

"And to think," she said, "that India is so indifferent about a trousseau that would have turned my head when I was a girl. I don't believe it *is* indifference either; I believe it is affectation."

"No, it is not, mamma. She is really indifferent to

all this. There is something troubles her. She was not resting when she sat so still. I saw her lips tremble and her eyelids quiver."

Mrs. Vivian cast a scrutinizing glance at the girl, thinking, "How is it that in some things she is observant?" But Rosalie, almost unconsciously, was repeating to herself the refrain of the song she had been reading:—

"All that's bright must fade."

"Rosalie, have done with that sentimental melancholy; it disturbs me; and it is untrue, besides. The best things are most enduring. And it is all nonsense, besides, to suppose that anything more serious than indolence troubles India. And now, my dear, do you know the programme of these bridal festivities and tour, as we arranged it yesterday?"

"No," said the young girl, trying to be interested.

Mrs. Vivian dropped herself into an easy chair at the side of the bed, and Rose sank upon the cushion at her feet, and laid her head in the lady's lap; and and while Valeria ran her fingers caressingly through the soft ringlets of the child, she said—

"The marriage was long ago fixed to come off on Miss Sutherland's birthday, and she and her friends see no reason to change it now. That, you know, my dear, is on the 15th of this month—a week from to-day. The ceremony is to take place in the morning, my love, and you are to be one of the bridesmaids. Immediately after the benediction, the bridal pair are to set out upon a tour of the springs and other places of fashionable summer resort, of six weeks. You and I, Rose, are going up into the pine woods, to a quiet

farm-house, to spend the hot months; for indeed, dear child, I do not think you strong enough to bear the fatigue of a northern journey, or the crowd and bustle of a watering-place."

"Dear mamma, how much you give up for me!"

"My child, I would do anything in the world to see you restored to health and cheerfulness like other young girls."

"But this, sweet mamma, is too much to sacrifice. It is too much for you to give up Saratoga and Nahant, where you meet so many friends and admirers, and where you enjoy and adorn society so much. Mamma, do not think of giving this pleasure up, and burying yourself for me in the pine woods. Let us go to Saratoga."

"My love! I tell you the long, fatiguing journey, the crowded hotels, the execrable tables, the wretched attendance, and the noise and confusion, would kill you, Rosalie!"

"And then my sweet mamma would really be the rich young southern widow she is generally supposed to be," said the girl, gazing on her young step-mother with a fond, sorrowful smile.

"Oh, Rosalie! why did you say that to me, love? Do you believe in the traditional selfishness of all step-mothers, from the days of Cinderella's step-dame to yours? Or have you read such poetry as—

'There's nothing true but heaven,'

till you have lost faith in all things?—poetry that, Heaven knows, gives anything but 'Glory to God, and peace and good-will to man.'"

"Dear mamma, I am very sorry I said what I did.

Oh, believe me, it was far from my heart to be so cruelly unjust as I see you must think me! *You selfish*—the most disinterested mother that ever cherished a poor, sick, troublesome child! Oh, forgive the light and thoughtless words that could be twisted into such a hint."

"Just tell me how you came to say what you did, Rosalie, for the words trouble me."

"Nay, never heed them, dear, kind mamma. Forget them; they were wicked words, since they gave you pain."

"Rosalie, I insist upon knowing what put such a thought into your head."

"Mother, sometimes I hear things not intended for my ear, which, nevertheless, I cannot help hearing"—

"Explain."

"Why, often when I have been reclining in a shaded window-seat with a book, or lying on a distant sofa with my eyes closed, and they think I am asleep, or quite abstracted, I hear them say, 'Poor girl, she is a trouble to herself and all around her.' 'She can never live to be a woman; so, if it were the Lord's will, it were better she should die now.' 'Her death would be a great relief to the young widow; and, by the way, Mrs. Vivian would come into the whole property then, would she not?' That is all, dear mamma. Do not let it disturb you. It did not disturb me the least."

Mrs. Vivian placed her hand upon the bell. Miss Vivian gently arrested her purpose, saying—

"What are you about to do, mamma?"

"Ring, and order our carriage. I will not stay in this house, where you are so cruelly wounded, one

minute longer than is required to put the horses to the carriage."

"Dear mother, you cannot surely imagine that it is in *this* house I have ever been injured, in word or deed?"

"Where, then, Rose? Rose, you have distressed me beyond all measure. Tell me where it is that such wanton words meet your ear?"

"Dear mother, almost everywhere where you and I sojourn for any length of time. On our own plantation; in our own house at New Orleans; at our place in the pine woods; and while we are travelling, in steamboats, in hotels—in short, wherever the great world that knows us has entered."

The lady looked so deeply distressed, and the maiden felt so grieved to see her troubled, that she hastened to turn the conversation, by saying, gaily—

"But, mamma, you did not finish telling me about our summer arrangements. You said that immediately after the marriage ceremony, the bridal pair would set out on a tour of the northern watering-places, and that you and I should go into the pine woods. And what next?"

"We shall spend two months in the pine woods, where the terebinthine air is so strongly recommended as the great specific for weak or diseased lungs; and where the quiet and regular hours, plain, simple food, and gentle exercise, will bring back the colour to my child's cheeks. And, after two months, when my drooping rose will be fresh and blooming again, I will take her to Charleston, South Carolina, there to meet the married pair by appointment, and who, it is to be hoped, will then be sufficiently satisfied with each

other's exclusive society, to be able to tolerate *ours* for a little while. When we join them, we embark across the ocean, and make the tour of Europe together—winter in Sicily, and return home next spring. And by that time, I hope, the sea voyage, the change of scene and of climate, will have completely restored my darling to health!"

CHAPTER VI.

LOVE AND GOLD.

On her forehead sitteth pride,
Crown'd with scorn, and falcon-eyed,
Yet she beneath, methinks, doth twine
Silken smiles that seem divine.
Can such smiles be false and cold?
Will she only wed for gold?"—*Barry Cornwall.*

WHILE Mrs. Vivian sat talking with her daughter in the bed-chamber of Miss Sutherland, the latter remained in the adjoining dressing-room, where we left her seated in the easy chair, with her hands folded upon her lap, and her eyes closed as in gentle repose, only sometimes a half-smothered, shuddering sigh disturbed the statue-like stillness of her form. It was no deep sorrow, no great anxiety, that troubled this favourite of fortune—only, being quite unused to pain of any sort, physical or mental, she was impatient of its lightest touch. But she had that day been summoned to the presence of her father, and by him had been informed of Mr. Mark Sutherland's whole plan,

as he had just learned it from the latter. The planter had told his daughter, with distinct and dreadful detail, of all the numerous privations, toils, hardships, and humiliations, and vaguely hinted at a countless variety of suffering she must endure, if she should become a party to her lover's purpose. He had further assured her, that if she should remain firm in opposing the plan of her lover, his resolution must finally yield to his affection for herself. And at last he had wrung from his daughter a promise, that she would make the total resignation of Mr. Mark Sutherland's plans the only condition upon which their marriage should proceed. And so the interview between father and daughter had closed; and Miss Sutherland had returned to her room with little disposition to be amused by the variety and splendour of her newly-arrived trousseau. And, by seeming lassitude and nonchalance, she had drawn upon herself the unjust censure of Mrs. Vivian, and the wondering compassion of the more sympathetic Rosalie.

India never for an instant doubted her power over Mark Sutherland; nay, she never mentally even limited the *extent* of that power. The worst she anticipated was a controversy with her betrothed. That this controversy could end in any other manner than in her own favour, she never once inquired. That his fanaticism must yield to her influence, she felt certain. But she did not like to have to exert this influence. She admired and honoured Mark Sutherland above all men—nay, there were times when she feared him above all things. And she loved him as those of her clime only love. And with all her faults, this spoiled child of fortune was too true a woman to wish to take

the position and tone of a dictator to the man she so loved. Nay, she felt indignant with all concerned in thrusting upon her such inevitable, yet such repulsive, "greatness." And now she sat trying to compose her nerves and collect her thoughts for the unavoidable interview to which she momentarily expected to be summoned.

She had not much longer to wait. A servant soon entered, and, bowing, informed her that Mr. Sutherland requested the favour of an interview at her earliest convenience, and desired to know when and where she would receive him.

"Where is Mr. Sutherland?" inquired the young lady.

"In the library, Miss."

"Proceed thither and announce me, then."

Arrived at the library, the man opened the door, and merely saying, "Miss Sutherland, sir," held it open until she had passed in, and then closing it, retired.

And India found herself alone with Mark. He was sitting at a central library-table, leaning with his head resting upon his hand; his face was very pale, his countenance haggard, his dark hair slightly dishevelled, his manner disturbed and anxious, yet withal controlled. He arose and advanced to meet her, led her to a sofa, and placed himself beside her. Taking her hand in his own, and pressing it gently, he looked down into her face, regarding her with a grave, sweet, sad, almost solemn expression of countenance; and, after a brief pause, he said, "My dearest India, you cannot be at a loss to understand my motive for requesting this interview?"

He paused, as expecting her assent, but she did not reply in any way. She did not even lift her glance from the carpet. He pressed her hand fondly, and resumed: "My love, the time has come, the opportunity is presented for us—even for *us*, my India—to put in practice some of those high examples of heroism, which in others have so often won our fervent admiration. Even *we*, my India, may"—

She arrested his serious words by suddenly drawing her hand away, and hurriedly exclaiming, "I have heard something of your purpose of manumitting the people on your various plantations. But I would prefer to hear your plan of benevolence, or philanthropy, whichever it may be, from your own lips, unwarped by prejudice, and uncoloured by passion, and *with as little preface as possible!*"

The coldness and reserve of her words and tones smote him to the heart. Nevertheless, he replied, "My purpose is no plan of benevolence or philanthropy, my dear India, but a simple act of justice, originating in a simple impulse of conscientiousness." Then gently repossessing himself of her hand, he held it tenderly in his own, while he began, and, for the fourth time since his return home, related all the mental and moral experiences that had led him to determine upon the contemplated act of emancipation. She heard him out without again interrupting him. She sat very still, with her face pale and impassable, and her eyes cast down. She was no match for him in argument, yet, nevertheless, seeing that he silently awaited her answer, and preferring to convert rather than to cast him off, she recalled and repeated all the arguments she had ever heard in defence of slavery;

she began by saying that she thought the existence of the system of slavery to be the manifest will and ordination of Divine Providence; and she wondered how any rational being could doubt it. Was not their present subordinate position here infinitely preferable to their former savage and cannibal condition on the coast of Congo? Here at least they were Christianized.

A smile dawned upon the young man's countenance. She saw and felt it. Her cheek flushed, and she hastened to say—

"They must be blind indeed, Mr. Sutherland, who cannot see in the enslavement of the African race by the Anglo-Saxons the purpose of Divine Providence to civilize Africa."

Mark Sutherland took her hand, and replied gently—

"My dear India, we do not deny that God continually brings good out of evil; but is *that* a justification of the evil? And even admitting, for argument's sake, that the reduction of a portion of the Ethiopian race to slavery by the Anglo-Americans is to be the means of Christianizing them, is it not full time, after two hundred years of bondage, that some of this harvest sowed with tears and blood should be reaped?—that some of these good fruits should begin to be enjoyed?"

"Besides," said Miss Sutherland, eluding his question and evading his eye, "there is a fitness in these relations between the European and the African races—Europeans could not engage in agricultural labour under the burning heat of our Southern sun"——

"But why *enslave* the negroes—why not emancipate and hire them?" interrupted Mark.

"O! you know," she replied, hastily, "that the negroes will not work effectually, unless driven to it."

"Plantation slaves will not, I grant you; but what has reduced them to this hopeless and inert condition?"

"I do not know why you should call their condition hopeless—I think, upon the whole, they are at least as hopeful and as happy as poor white people, or free blacks. And I never heard of a bad master, who was not also a bad son, brother, husband, father, neighbour—in short, who was not a bad Christian. And if you feel a call to reform the world, Mark Sutherland, why not begin at the right end, and Christianize it—and all other reform will follow early, and as a matter of course. Why not do that?"

"Because, my dear India, unluckily the world thinks itself already Christian. 'And if the light that is in it be darkness, how great is that darkness?' Neither, my dear girl, am I the missionary to dispel it. I am quite unworthy of, and unpretending to, the name of Christian, and have no presumption to begin reforming the world, either at the right end or the wrong end. I only wish to do what I consider a simple act of justice, in a matter between me and my own conscience."

"I do not understand why your 'conscience' should meddle in the matter. The system appears to me to be perfectly right—every thing that we can wish. There is a beautiful adaptation in the mutual relations existing between the Anglo-Saxon master and the Ethiopian slave; for, observe, the Anglo-Saxon is highly intellectual, strong, proud, firm, self-willed, impelled to govern, gifted with great mental independ-

ence; the Ethiopian, on the contrary, is very *un*intellectual, weak, lowly in mind, imitative, affectionate, docile, easily controlled—and these traits of character so harmonize in this connection, that it seems to need only the spirit of Christianity to make it a beautiful and happy correspondence."

"I think, my dearest girl, that even in that case the 'beautiful and happy correspondence' would be like Irish reciprocity—*all on one side.* Selfishness so blinds us, India"——

I have no space to dilate on what was said on either side. Both grew very serious, earnest, and emphatic. India became heated, fevered; she brought forward every plea she had ever heard pressed in favour of her own side of the controversy; but she was not his equal in logic. Baffled and disappointed in her failure, and unnerved by the strangeness of anxiety and contention, she suddenly burst into tears, and passionately exclaimed—

"You do not love me! You never loved me! You prefer the fancied welfare of these miserable negroes to my comfort and happiness!"

Mark Sutherland saw and felt only her tears and sorrow, and addressed himself to soothe her with all a lover's solicitude. She took advantage of his tenderness—perhaps she even misunderstood it. She had failed to convince his judgment by her arguments, failed to change his purpose by opposition and reproaches, and now she resolved to try the power of love—of persuasion. She let him draw her to his bosom; she dropped her head upon his shoulder, with her blushing, tearful face and soft hair against his cheek, her arm upon his neck, and half-caressing, suf-

fered herself to be caressed, and let him feel how sweet her love was, by the unutterable sweetness of her shy caress; and when his heart was weak unto death, she pleaded with him, yieldingly, submissively, tearfully, as with one who had the right and the power of ordering her destiny—that he would not doom her to a lot so cruel, so terrible; that she was so unprepared for it; that he must know she was; that it would kill her in a year.

All this was pleaded with her head upon his shoulder, with her face against his cheek, with her hand pressed around his neck. This seductive gentleness was very hard to resist, indeed. He answered—

"My dearest India, you are sole mistress of your own destiny, and, to a great extent, of mine. I did hope that you would have borne me company in my pilgrimage, and, even from the first, have shared my lot, hard as it is sure to be. We have both read and heard how women, even the most tenderly reared and delicate, have, for affection, for constancy, for truth, and the great idea of duty, borne poverty, toil, hardships and privations, even with a better grace and with more fortitude and patience than the strongest men. But I begin to think that history and tradition must exaggerate. How, indeed, could my own fragile lady-love endure what *my* strong frame must encounter and overcome? No, dear India, ardently as I once desired that you should be, from this time forward, the partner of my lot, I see and feel that the wish was thoughtless, unreasonable, selfish. It was exacting far too much. No, dearest, painful as it must be to tear myself from you, I must go forth alone to do battle with an adverse fate. Yet why should I call

it adverse? I go forth with youth, and health, and strength; with a liberal education, and some talent; and when I have attained fame and fortune, then, like a true knight, I will come and lay them at my lady's feet, and claim—no, not claim—but *sue for* my blessed reward."

She said that she could not let him go; it would break her heart to part with him. Could he leave her to break her heart? Would he not give up his purpose for her sake, and stay with her? Her head was still upon his shoulder, and her face against his cheek. With a slight movement, at once shy and fond, she pressed her lips to his neck, and repeated her question: Would he not give up his purpose for her sake, and stay with her?

He felt his fortitude and strength fast leaving him. Amidst the fondest caresses, he said—

"My own dear India! how have I merited such love? My India, I will not stay so long as I said. I will not stay till I have won fame or fortune. I cannot remain away so long. But as soon as I have won a modest competence—in a year or two—I will be back to claim my blessing."

Her tears fell like rain. Still she clasped, and pressed, and kissed his neck, and said that would not do at all; he must not leave her—no, not for a week; she could not, would not, bear it; she should die.

He kissed away her tears, fast as they fell, and then proposed again that she should go with him, promising to do more than man ever did, or even could do, to shield her from hardship till all hardship should be over, as it surely would be in time.

With a few deep-drawn sighs, she lifted up her

head, and answered, No, she could not go; she was far too delicate to bear such a change; he ought to know it, and ought not to ask it. *No, if he loved her*, he must give up his project, and stay with her; *and if he did love her*, he surely would do it. Any man that really loved would do that much for his lady.

She was evidently merging from her tender, alluring mood, into an irritable and capricious one.

Full of doubt and trouble at her words, he answered—

"My dearest India, I told you that this purposed action of mine is a measure of conscience. You know it involves an immense sacrifice. Do you suppose that I would make that sacrifice, except from the most righteous principles, and do you suppose I can possibly abandon such principles? My India, if from my great love for you I could now sacrifice my conscience to your convenience, you would soon lose all esteem for me, and, in losing all esteem, lose all comfort in loving me. My India, no honourable woman can continue to love a man who has forfeited his own and her respect. Do you not know that?"

Coldly she put away his encircling arms—coldly she withdrew herself from him, saying—

"I see how it is, sir! You do not love me; you are faithless; you seek an excuse to break with me, by putting our union upon conditions impossible for me to comply with. You need not have taken such a crooked path to a plain end, sir; you needed only to have frankly named your wish, to have had your plighted troth restored. You are free, sir——to unite yourself with one of the favoured race, the objects of your manifest preference, if you please"——

This last, most insulting clause was cast at him with a glance of insufferable scorn, as she turned to leave the room.

His brow crimsoned with the sudden smite of shame, and—

"*This from you, India!*" he exclaimed.

She was looking at him still; but the scorn and anger slowly passed from her face, as he rose and advanced towards her, saying—

"But you are excited; I will not lay your bitter words to heart, nor suffer you to leave me in anger. Dearest India!"

She had already regretted her sharp words; love and anger were balanced in her bosom so evenly, that it took but a trifle to disturb the equilibrium; and now his forbearance and his kind words completely upset the scale, and love ascended. Turning to him once more, and throwing herself in his open arms, she burst into tears, and said—

"Dearest Mark, only give up this mad, mad project, and I am all yours. Oh, you know I am, any way; for even now the separation that would pain you, would kill or madden me! But, oh! you know I cannot endure the hardships you would prepare for me; they would be equally fatal. Give it up, Mark! Dear Mark, give it up, for my sake, for your dear mother's sake, for all our sakes! Stay with us! do not divide us, and break our hearts, by leaving us! We all love you so! you know we do! We would do anything in the world for you, if you would stay with us! And I only grow angry and lose my senses, and utter mad words, when you talk of leaving us! Don't go, Mark! Dearest Mark, don't leave us."

And so she pleaded, hiding her tears and blushes on his shoulder, and clasping, and pressing, and kissing his neck and cheek. The pleadings of young beauty to young love, most powerful, most painful to resist, yet they were resisted, mournfully, but calmly and firmly, resisted.

She raised her head from his shoulder.

"And you persist in your purpose?" she said.

"My India, I cannot do otherwise."

"Notwithstanding all the suffering you may cause your mother, your relatives, and me?"

"My own India, I would I could bear all your grief in my own person."

"But you adhere to your resolution?"

"I have no alternative."

"And this is your final decision?"

He bowed.

"Even if you should lose me for ever?"

He started, as if suddenly struck by a bullet. He changed colour, but did not speak. She regarded him fixedly. At last she said, slowly and calmly—

"Will you please to answer my question?"

"India," he said, "I will not for a moment, admit such a possibility. God will never repay fidelity to conscience with calamity."

"Perhaps it might not *be* a calamity. I think it were well we should understand each other. The question is now before you—do not evade it."

"My India, it is not *practically* before me. No, thank Heaven, the intolerable alternative of resigning you or my principles is *not* yet before me."

"By all our past dreams, and present hopes, of happiness, I assure you that the alternative is now sub-

mitted to you, sir. And I adjure you, by your conscience, and by the strength of your vaunted principles, to decide the question, which I now repeat to you—if the adherence of your present purpose involve the final loss of my hand and heart, do you still persist in that purpose?"

Something in her tone caught up his glance, to rivet it upon her. Never in all their lives had she seemed to him so beautiful, so reghant, so irresistibly attractive. He gazed upon, he studied her face; nor did she turn it from him, nor avert her glance. She met his searching gaze proudly, fearlessly, imperially; she seemed to wish that he should read her soul, and know its immutable determination. There was no pique, no anger, no weakness, or wavering, on that high, haughty brow now; there was nothing but calm, indomitable resolution. He gazed upon her in wonder, and in sorrow, some time fascinated by the imperious beauty of her young brow, and marvelling that this could be the tender, seductive woman that lay cooing on his bosom scarce an hour ago. It would not do to waver now. He took her hand again. He answered, solemnly—

"India, you have adjured me, by my conscience, by the sacredness of my honour, to answer your question, and say whether, were the alternative finally before me, I should resign my resolution, or *be* resigned by you. India, I may not, must not, evade this. And I answer now, by my sacred honour and my hopes of heaven, come what may, of trial, of suffering, or of agony, I will never forego this purpose, to which reason and conscience alike urge me."

"And that is your final determination?"

He bowed.

"Now, then, hear mine; but first I give you back your plighted troth and its less perishable symbol"—here she drew a diamond ring from her finger, and handed it to him—"and I remove your image from my heart with less difficulty than I disentangle this miniature one from my chain"—here she took a locket, set with diamonds, from her chatelaine, and handed him. He received both pledges back, and stood with a certain mournful dignity, awaiting her further words and actions. "And now," she said, "let me make you thoroughly acquainted with my thought upon this subject which so interests you, so that you may see how far, as the East is from the West, is my thought from yours. Know, that I like the position that I occupy, the power that I wield; our plantation is as large as a German or Italian principality; our people are better governed, more prosperous, and more profitable, than the subjects of such a principality. We have more power than its prince. And I was born to this power; I am accustomed to it; I like it. Heaven crowned me with it; and do you think that I will discrown my brow to become—what? A drudging peasant? NEVER! And now, hear my oath. As you are the 'dupe' of a party, we separate, never to meet again until you have recovered manhood and independence enough to abjure this pernicious influence, and abandon the mad project to which it has forced you—so help me God!"

And, turning haughtily away, she left the room.

CHAPTER VII.

REACTION.

"Pray Heaven for firmness thy whole soul to bend
To this thy purpose—to begin, pursue,
With thoughts all fixed and feelings purely kind;
Strength to complete, and with delight review,
And grace to give the praise where all is due."—*Charles Wilcox.*

It was over. Until this, he had not realized his true position. Nay, he did not fully realize it now. He sat, as one stunned, in the seat into which he had dropped when the door closed behind her. Until now, he had been elevated by a high enthusiasm in his purpose, and supported by a firm faith in her sympathy and co-operation—a faith, the strength of which he had not known until it was stricken from him, and he was left weaker than a child.

Why! it really had not seemed so great a sacrifice to resign wealth and position with *her* by his side—with *her* approving looks, and smiles, and words—with *her* cordial, affectionate concurrence. And how often the picture had glowed before his imagination, as he recalled her kindling cheek, and kindling eye, and fervent imagination, while reading with him of some heroic deed of self-devotion in *another!* And when he thought of all that earnest enthusiasm with himself for its object——forgive him, it was no better than a lover's aspiration, perhaps; but all his soul took fire at her image, and all things seemed easy to do, to be, or to suffer, for such an unspeakable joy. That *he*

should be her Curtius, her Bayard, her Hampden, Sydney, her *hero*. And until now, he had believed this, and had lived and acted under a strange illusion. And if for an instant his faith in her sympathy had ever been shaken, it was merely as the Christian believer's trust is shaken, only to strike its roots the deeper after the jar.

But now—oh! this was indeed the bitterness of death! In the first stunned moment after his fall from such a height of confidence and joy, into such a depth of desolation and wretchedness, he could scarcely believe in his misery, far less analyze it, and detect its hidden and bitterest element. And *this* was its bitterest element—the ascertained antagonism of his India—her *utter* antagonism! This was the weapon that had felled him to the earth. This was the fang of the adder, struck deep in his heart, and poisoning all his soul!—with what? With distrust!—distrust of her, of himself, of all men and women! As yet, all this he felt, without acknowledging, nay, without perceiving it. He sat there as one in a trance. And the hours that passed over him were as a blank.

He was aroused by psychological disturbance.

Why should he immolate himself upon the altar of a principle that one half of the Christian world would consider a mere madness? And how if, after all, it *was* madness? How if he was self-deceived?—actuated by fanaticism, and not by legitimate heroism? *She* whose whole soul had glowed at the mere mention of *true* magnanimity—*she* whose approbation had been the ardently desired reward of his sacrifice—the object of his young heart's passionate aspiration—how had *she* regarded him? As a hero or a fanatic! How had

she received him in his new aspect? Not as he had often fondly prevised—not with a faithful, loving clasp, strengthening his hands—not with a fervent, inspiring gaze, imparting courage and energy to his soul—not with approval and sympathy, and faithful cordial concurrence, confirming his faith—arming him for any conflict—strengthening him for any sacrifice. Oh! no, no; far otherwise. She had heard him with repelling hand and averted eye, and scorn, and loathing, and repulsion, that had left him bitterly disappointed, humbled, weakened, prostrated, *paralyzed* by self-doubt!

Was she right? Was he a madman?

Oh! there had been an element of worship and of aspiration in his love for India. And was this idol a mere stone, upon which he had broken himself in vain? He could not bear to think so. He was willing to believe himself a fool or a madman, so that *her* image remained undimmed, unspotted, unchanged in its shrine—so that she was still a perfect woman, angel, goddess!

And was this not truly so? Was her decision not really just, and was he not indeed a fanatic?

To *believe* this, would end the struggle and the agony at once. To *confess* this, would restore harmony and happiness to the grievously-disturbed family circle, and peace and joy to himself and his India! How easy to step down from his pedestal of principle, frankly confess it to have been a false position, taken in a fit of generous, youthful enthusiasm; to jest over it with his friends—*friends recovered by that step;* to call himself Don Quixotte the younger, laugh at the matter, and dismiss it to oblivion. And then India! This

beautiful, bewildering girl would be his own in five days. That vision whelmed him in vague, intense delirium.

Would it be so easy to step from his post, to abjure his principles, to silence his conscience?

No! Even amid the intoxicating dream of his beautiful India's love, his stern soul answered, No!

He knew that he had *not* taken a false position—the Tempter could not persuade him that he had done so. He knew himself to be right; he knew that he was not self-deceived. Not even now, in this hour of bitter trial, would his moral sense be so confused. In his conscience, the dividing line between right and wrong was too clearly, distinctly, sharply defined, and there was no possibility of confusing or mistaking the boundary.

And so the mental sophistry of the temptation ended.

And now for the moral conflict. Admitted that his convictions were those of pure rational duty, why should he sacrifice so much to them? Did *others* around him do so? Did *any one* live up to his or her high idea of right? On the contrary, *who* did not silence the voice of conscience every day of their lives? *Who* in this world was not, in their turn, and in their way, more or less unjust, selfish? And did they not, the best of them, compound for all this by going to church, and confessing themselves "lost and ruined sinners," and returning with a clean conscience, like a tablet newly sponged over, and prepared to be inscribed all over again with the same sins, to be effaced in the same manner? Now, why could not he also do his pleasure, enjoy his wealth, hold to this

world, and secure heaven—all on these easy terms? It was only to make a profession.

It would not do. His heart, it is true, had not been touched by the spirit of Christianity, yet his mind was too clear and right to deceive itself so delightfully about this matter. That grace of God which hath appeared unto *all* men, taught him that Christ was not the minister of sin—not one who gave out patents conferring impunity in sin, and signed with his own life-blood—not one who wiped out the sins of the soul, as men sponge out marks from a note-book, to make room for more of the same sort of matter—not one to make his own righteousness the shield for our wilful unrighteousness. In a word, he felt and knew that Christ was not the minister of sin.

This sorely tried and tempted man had made no professions, had used no cant, but he nevertheless possessed a large portion of natural conscientiousness, and he had a frank, light-hearted manner of doing right, bordering on levity and nonchalance—a manner tending to mislead superficial observers into making too shallow an estimate of the depth and earnestness of his convictions and principles.

All his family, from the cold-hearted, clear-headed Clement Sutherland, down to the ardent and impulsive India, had miscalculated the strength of his character and the firmness of his purpose. And hence the comparative indifference with which they had hitherto received the communication of his intentions. I say *comparative indifference;* for though indeed the family were much disturbed that he should for a moment entertain such purposes as he had revealed, yet none of them had doubted that the influences which

should be brought to bear upon him would compel him to abandon his project. And thus agitation at this time was calmness, perfect halcyon peace, in comparison with the confusion, the chaos, the tremendous storm of indignation, opposition, and persecution, that afterwards arose and hurtled around him. There are no wars so bloody as civil wars; there are no feuds so deadly as family feuds; there are no enemies so bitter, so cruel, so unrelenting, as those of our own blood, when they *are* enemies! Others may spare, but they will *never* spare! Others may in time become sated with vengeance, but *they* never! while their victim has one faculty of mind left uncrazed, or one heartstring unwrung. Others may in time be touched by some sense of justice; *they* never! they hold to and defend their cruelty. Others may repent; *they* never. It would seem that a fatal blindness of sight and hardness of heart fell upon them as a judgment from Heaven for their unnatural sin.

Perhaps *you* think that the days of martyrdom have been passed ever since the stake and the faggot went into disrepute; and that the spirit of persecution went out with the fires of Smithfield. If you do, may you never have more reason for thinking otherwise than is contained in the simple narrative before you. I am not going to enter minutely into the details of all the scenes that followed that last interview between Mark and India. I have all this time gone around and about the subject, fearing or disliking to approach it. In real life, evil, malignant passion is not really the graceful and dignified and all but too fascinating thing that we see it represented on the stage—for instance, in the toga and buskins of Brutus

and Cassius, or the train and plumes of Lucretia Borgia. Nor has it a stately, measured gait, a sonorous utterance, or a grand gesture. It is a humiliating fact, but it *is* a fact, that it looks and behaves very much more like an excited Terry or Judy at a fair. It shakes its fists, and strides, and vociferates, and chokes, and stutters. Fierce anger, hatred, and vengeance are of *no* rank. They show just as hideous, revolting, and *vulgar*, in the prince or princess, as in the meanest peasant. And all this has been suggested by the recollection of the manner in which Mark Sutherland was treated by his family.

He had made one more attempt to obtain another interview with India, by addressing to her a note. This note was returned, with the seal undisturbed, and with an insulting menace to the effect that any communication addressed by Mr. Mark Sutherland to Miss Sutherland must be preceded by a complete and final renunciation of his present purposes, before it could be received by her. Full of bitterness, he wrote to her again, and concluded his note thus :—

"I know you now, India; I know you perfectly. I no longer worship you. Alas! there is nothing in you to worship, or even to approve beyond your enchanting beauty. And yet I love you still for that bewildering beauty and for the dream that is passing away. And you love me for something better than that; you love me, now that for conscience I withstand you, as you never loved me before. You wrong me in taking yourself away. You take from me mine own. There is a voice in your heart that assures you of this. But you stifle that voice. You outrage

Nature—but beware! Be sure that Nature is a dread goddess, and Nemesis waits upon her bidding!"

There is something awful in the just anger of a noble-minded, pure-hearted, high-spirited man; and thrice awful is it to the woman who loves him, when that anger falls upon herself.

India received *this* letter, and as she read it, bitter and scalding tears fell upon it. He had surmised the truth—she *did* love him now with ten-fold strength and fervour, now that she had tried and proved his strength. There was something in him to love, to lean upon, to worship—something far more reliable, more attractive, and more binding than mere masculine beauty—than the stately form, the dark, spirited countenance, and the fascinating gaiety, that had pleased her childish fancy. There was firmness, courage, fortitude, *moral strength;* something that a true woman loves to rest upon, serve, adore. A wild and passionate longing seized her heart—to go and stand by him in his emergency—to help to sustain him, if it were ever so slight a help, in this storm of opposition.

While the soul of India was convulsed in the terrible struggle between her strong and passionate affection, and her invincible spirit of antagonism, Mark Sutherland lingered at Cashmere. The habit of considering himself a son of the house could not easily be uprooted; and the absorption of all his thoughts and feelings in the subject of his broken relations with India, prevented him, for a time, from perceiving the cold and scornful demeanour of the master of the house. Had he not been totally abstracted in mind, he would not for an hour have borne the arrogance, which neither age nor relationship justified.

Miss Sutherland had perseveringly absented herself from the drawing-room, and from the table—confining herself to her own room, and taking her meals there.

At length one day, the family, as usual, with the exception of India, sat down to dinner. There were present Clement and Paul Sutherland, Mrs. Vivian, Miss Vivian, Mr. Bolling, Mark, and Lincoln—a party of seven persons claiming to be refined women, or honorable men; in a word, ladies and gentlemen—enough, under any emergency, to preserve the decencies of a family dinner-table. Clement Sutherland, the host, sat with the usual cloud upon his brow. When the waiter was about to lift the cover from the dish before him, he arrested his act, by saying—"Stop, sir! where is Miss Sutherland? Go, and let her know that dinner waits."

The man bowed and left the room. An embarrassing pause and silence ensued, during which Clement Sutherland sat back in his chair, with a scowl upon his yellow forehead, with an expression and an attitude that he doubtless supposed to be awfully tragic and imposing, and which, in truth, was inexpressibly disagreeable, and even alarming; for all present felt that under all that ridiculous dramatic acting there was some real offence meant—some mean, unmanly, inhospitable act to be perpetrated. In about ten minutes, the servant returned. Entering, and stepping lightly, he went up to his master's side, bowed, and in a low voice said—"Miss Sutherland, sir, has ordered me to say that she desires to be excused." And, with another bow, the waiter retired, and stood behind his master's chair. Clement Suther-

land started up with an angry gesture, pushed his chair violently behind him, to the risk of upsetting my gentleman-waiter, and exclaimed—"Sirs, I have to ask you if the laws of hospitality are to be so abused as to exile my daughter from the head of the table, and how long it is your pleasure that this state of things shall continue?"

This explosion was just as shocking as though something like it had not been expected.

Mark Sutherland, with a crimsoned brow, arose from his chair.

Lincoln, with perfect self-possession, deliberately arose, walked into the hall, took down his hat, returned, and, standing before Clement Sutherland, deliberately said—"Mr. Sutherland, permit me to make a due acknowledgment of the hospitality you have extended me, and also to express my regret that it has been so unpardonably trespassed against. I shall be most happy if you will afford me the opportunity to reciprocate the hospitality, and atone for the trespass. Good day, sir.

"Oh! young man, you have nothing to thank me for." Bowing to the ladies present, Lincoln withdrew. Mark Sutherland snatched his hat, and, without a word of leave-taking, left the room.

All the other members of the family circle remained seated at the table, with the exception of Miss Vivian, who, rising, excused herself, and retired.

When Mark Sutherland reached the rose terrace, he called to Lincoln to stop, and wait until their horses were saddled. And then he hastened off to the stables to give his orders.

In a very short time the horses were brought up,

and the young men mounted, and galloped away from the house. They rode on in silence for some time—Lincoln buried in calm thought, and Mark enrapt in a sort of fierce reverie. At length he backed his horse close up to Lincoln's steed, seized his hand, and exclaimed, "Lauderdale, how can I ever atone for exposing you to such insult?"

"Insult? My dear fellow"—(he was just about to say, "Mr. Clement Sutherland *cannot* insult me;" but, delicate and generous in his consideration for the feelings of Mark, he only said)—"look into my face, and see if you think I am very much troubled."

And, indeed, the pleasant countenance of the youth was well calculated to re-assure his friend.

They relapsed into silence as they approached the river. Sutherland was absorbed in mournful and bitter reverie, which Lauderdale forbore to break. They crossed the Pearl in perfect silence; Lincoln glancing from the beautiful semi-transparent river, with its surface softly flushed with rose and saffron clouds, to the gorgeous fields of cotton, with its myriads beyond myriads of golden white flowers. When they left the ferry-boat, and cantered up the gradual ascent of the road, and entered upon the domain of Silentshade, once more Mark put out his hand and seized that of his friend, saying, "Here at last is *my* home, where I may welcome any friend of mine for any length of time; and I do not so much *invite* you, as I *entreat* you, to come and stay with me as long as you can give me your company, if it be only, dear Lincoln, to prove that you forgive me the offence that has been offered to you."

"Pray say no more about it, dear Mark; how are

you responsible for an affront offered *yourself* as well as me? As for staying with you, I will do so with the greatest pleasure as long as I may."

And once more Mark Sutherland fell into silence—into bitter and sorrowful meditation—into deep despondency. Since India's haughty rejection of his hand, his life had grown very real to him. Before that, he had thought, spoken, and acted, as one under the influence of some inspiring dream. His anticipation and appreciation of the trials that awaited him, differed as much from the real experience of them as the imagining of some glorious martyrdom falls short of the suffering it.

Young enthusiast that he was, he had thought only of the excitement and glory of the heroism, and not of the fierce torture and maddening shame of the sacrifice. But now he felt his position in all its dreadful reality. And it was well that he should so feel it. It would test his sincerity, try his strength, prove his character. And now he rode on despairing, almost heart-broken. Yet even in this dark and clouded hour, one bright star of hope, and promise, and strength, shone on him—a mother's love—a mother's undying, unchanging love. It has been the theme of poets, of philosophers, and of novelists, since hearts first beat with affections, and tongues first gave them utterance. It is the chosen Scripture illustration to express even the divine love of God. The young man rode along, deeply musing on that mother's love—deeply thirsting for it. He felt—man as he was—that it would be a sweet and grateful relief to sit by her side, to drop his proud, but weary head upon her shoulder, and for a little while to give vent to the

flood of sorrow now stifled in his bosom—sure, that if others thought even such a transient yielding to grief unmanly, she, that tender and affectionate mother, never would think so. And so he mused upon that love—the only earthly love that never faileth—that neither misfortune can abate, nor crime alienate. And, unfortunate and suffering in the cause of conscience as he was, how confidently he trusted in that mother's sympathy and support! Yea, though all other affection might fail him—though friends should forsake, and relatives abandon him, and even his bride discard him—she, his mother, would be true!

He would have staked his salvation upon this, as they turned into the avenue of limes leading up to the house, and saw Mrs. Sutherland standing, smiling, upon the piazzi. But, on seeing the young men approach, in one instant, the lady's countenance changed.

She had had her lesson.

Without advancing one step to meet and welcome them, she allowed them, after dismounting from their horses, to walk quite up the steps, and to the very spot where she stood, and to bow and speak, before she relaxed one muscle of her countenance.

She replied to their greeting in the coldest tones, inviting them to enter the house.

For an instant, Mark and Lincoln raised their eyes to each other's face, and their glances met. A pang of mortification and disappointment sped through the heart of Sutherland; and Lauderdale, apparently not the least surprised or disconcerted, took his resolution.

Preceded by the lady, they entered the house, and

passed into a front parlour, and at her cold invitation, which seemed more like a strained and reluctant permission granted, they took seats. Nothing could be more deeply disagreeable and embarrassing than the next few minutes. Mrs. Sutherland took her sofa in perfect silence, turned her face towards them with a look of cold enquiry, and assumed the air of waiting to hear what might be their business with her—what they might have to communicate.

This was very perplexing. They did not come on business—indeed, they were made to feel that *they had no business there.* They had come to be entertained, and comforted, and compensated, after the Clement Sutherland infliction. They had nothing particular to answer to that cold, questioning look, except Lauderdale, who, cool as his own clime, informed Mrs. Sutherland that the day was "very fine." The lady bowed in silent assent.

"The weather for many days past has been very pleasant," continued Lincoln, without the least embarrassment.

"Yes—I think the present state of the atmosphere highly favourable to *travelling*," said the lady.

"Your climate here, madam, is not near so sultry as we of the North have supposed it to be," persevered Lincoln.

"Hem—yet at this season we think it too hot to be wholesome to you of the North," said the lady, with a curling lip.

"Humph," thought Lauderdale, "your courtesy, madam, is cold enough to cool the hottest hour of the hottest day, in the hottest clime under the sun." But, turning to his friend Mark, said—

"Sutherland, if madame will excuse us, will you be kind enough to let me have my room?"

And Mark, released from the vice into which he had felt himself compressed for the last ten minutes, very gladly sprang up to accompany him. Lauderdale bowed to Mrs. Sutherland, with some pardonable formality of ceremony, perhaps, as they left the parlour.

When they had reached Lincoln's chamber, in the second story, Mark threw himself into a chair, and covered his face with his hands. Lincoln went calmly to work, packing up his wardrobe. After a while, seeing that Sutherland kept his attitude of humiliation, he went up to him, clapped him upon the shoulder cheerfully, and said—

"*Never* mind, my dear Mark! *never* mind! You take this to heart far more than necessary. Now, I dare say that one of your hot-blooded, fire-eating Mississippians, treated as I have been, would call somebody out, and do something desperate; but I really do not feel obliged to do anything of the sort."

"*I* am a Mississippian—do you consider *me* a very hot-blooded person? Am I not rather a miserable poltroon, to see my friend and guest outraged and insulted as you have been?"

"Well, that is as fine a piece of self-accusation as I have met with since reading the formula of confession in a Roman Catholic missal. You could not help it, Mark—you could not affront age or womanhood, in my defence or your own," said Lauderdale; and he resumed his packing.

In a very few minutes it was completed, and then

he came to announce his departure to Mark, and to take leave of him.

"I have nothing to say to you, dear Lincoln—nothing whatever, except once more to entreat your pardon for what has passed, and to wish you well with all my heart."

He could not seek to change his guest's purpose—could not ask him to remain; how could he do so, indeed? He wished to order the carriage, but Lincoln positively refused to avail himself of it, saying that he would walk to the next village, and send for his trunks. Mark impressed upon him the use of his own riding-horse, and Lincoln, to avoid wounding him, accepted it.

The young men then went down stairs; Lincoln entered the parlour, to bid adieu to his hostess, and Mark left the house to order the horses, for he was resolved to accompany his friend.

In a few minutes they were in their saddles, and on the road leading to C——, a muddy, miserable town, about five miles down the river.

Here the friends finally separated, but not until Lincoln's trunks had been sent for, and had arrived, and Lincoln himself had entered the stage that passed through the village that night, and was to convey him to the steamboat landing on the Mississippi, by which route he preferred to return north. They took leave with mutual assurance of remembrances, and promises of frequent correspondence.

It was late at night when Mark Sutherland returned to his home, and he immediately went to his room.

He arose the next morning, with the full determination to set immediately to work.

"I must plunge myself into action, lest I wither by despair," might have been his thought. His mother received him at the breakfast-table with coldness. He told her respectfully what he intended to do during the day. She curled her lip, and begged him to proceed, without remorse or fear, to unroof the house that sheltered her head—and she trusted Heaven would give her strength to bear even that.

After breakfast, he set out, and rode to Jackson, to engage the services of a lawyer to assist him in making out the deeds, and taking the legal measures required in emancipating his people. As the distance to the city was a full day's journey, and he had business enough to occupy the whole of the second day, he did not reach home until the evening of the third day.

He came, accompanied by a lawyer. They were both tired and hungry, but found no supper prepared, and no one to make them welcome. Mr. Sutherland went out, and enquired for his mother, and was told that the lady desired to be excused from receiving an official, that had come to make her homeless. Mark stifled a sigh; he ordered refreshments for his guest, and soon after showed him to his sleeping chamber.

The next day was a very busy, yet a very trying one. On coming down into the breakfast-room, Mark Sutherland heard with poignant sorrow that his mother had departed from the house, carrying with her many of her personal effects, as if for a long or permanent absence, and had gone to take up her abode in Cashmere. In consternation at this act, Mark

Sutherland rushed out to institute further enquiries, and found in front of the house a baggage-waggon, with Billy Bolling standing up in the midst, receiving and packing away trunks, boxes, and packages, that were lifted to him by two negro men in attendance.

"In the name of Heaven, what is the meaning of all this, uncle?" asked Mark with trepidation.

Mr. Bolling stood up, took his handkerchief leisurely from his pocket, wiped his flushed, perspiring face, replaced it, and answered—

"It means, sir, that you have turned my sister out of doors; that is all it means."

"But, uncle, my dear mother has perfect"——

"D——n it, sir, don't call my sister mother, or me uncle! You are no son or nephew of ours; we wash our hands of you! We cast you off! We'll have nothing to do with you!"

"Why, Mr. Bolling, what is the"——

"Confound it, sir, don't talk to me; you are a villain, sir! James, drive on!" And clapping his hat upon his head, Mr. Bolling sat down and settled the last box in its place, and the waggon was driven off.

It is impossible to describe the state of mind in which Mark Sutherland found himself. The distracting thoughts and emotions that whirled through his brain and heart, excited him almost to frenzy. He immediately wrote an imploring, passionate note to his mother, briefly alluding to the independence he intended to secure to her, and supplicating her to return to her own home. He sent it off; and, in a few minutes, unsatisfied with that note, he wrote another, more affectionate, more ardent, more supplicating, and despatched that also.

And then, half-maddened as he was, he turned and set himself to his business. He caused all the servants to be assembled on the lawn. He went out to them, and announced his intention of setting free, and sending all who were willing to go, to Liberia. He explained to them the good that must accrue to the younger, and more intelligent and industrious among them, who might emigrate and settle in the last-named place. This news did not take the negroes the least by surprise. They had heard whisperings of the cause that had broken off their master's marriage, and set all his family and friends at feud with him. After closing his little speech to the assembled slaves, he singled out some dozen among them—heads of cabin families—old and steady men; and he took them with him into his library, where he explained to them, at greater length, the advantages of the plan of emigration to Liberia. And then he dismissed them, to converse with each other, to reflect, and decide what they wished to do.

Next, he left his study to go and enquire if the messenger sent to his mother had returned. He found the man watching for him in the hall. He held a letter in his hand. Mr. Sutherland eagerly snatched it. It contained a few lines, formally advising him that no further communication would be received from him, which was not preceded by a full and complete renunciation of his obnoxious plans. While his gaze was painfully riveted upon this note, the second messenger arrived, bringing a letter in his hand. He seized it. *It was his own, returned unopened.*

"Did you see Mrs. Sutherland, Flamingo?"

"Yes, sir."

"What did she say?"

"I gave her the letter, sir; she took it, and read the direction, and handed it back to me, and told me to take it back to him who sent it, and not to bring her another one."

"That will do—you may go," said Mark, and a spasm of pain twitched his countenance, as he tore up the letter, and threw the fragments away.

"That is not all, sir—there is something else."

"Well, what new stab?" he thought; but he *said*—

"Well, what is it?"

Flamingo took from under his arm a small packet, wrapped in tissue paper, and handed it to him.

"What is this? Where did you get this?"

"Miss Rosalie gave it to me to bring to you."

"You may go now," said Mr. Sutherland, as he opened a door, and passed into the parlour, and sat down to look at the packet. It was a little morocco case, containing a lady's small pocket Bible, bound in white velvet and silver, with silver clasps. An elegant little *bijou* it was. Upon the fly-leaf was written, "*Rosalie Vivian, from her affectionate and happy mother.*" And this writing bore a date of several years before.

On the opposite page was inscribed, "*Mark Sutherland, with the deep respect of Rosalie Vivian.*" And this inscription bore the date of to-day. A leaf was folded down, and when he opened it at the 27th Psalm, he saw marked this passage: "When my father and my mother forsake me, then will the Lord take me up." There was still another page turned down, and another pencil stroke, enclosing these words, (Mark x. 29,) "And Jesus answered, and said, Verily, I say unto you, there is no man hath left home, or brethren, or

sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake and the gospel's, but he shall receive an hundred-fold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come, eternal life."

He turned over the little book with a fond look and smile—partly given to the elegant little *bijou* itself, such an inappropriate sort of copy to be sent to a man—and partly to the fair, gentle girl, its donor. The little incident came to him like a soft, encouraging pressure of the hand, or a kind word at his greatest need—like a loving benediction. And for those blessed words that were marked, they were dropped into his broken and tearful heart, like good seeds into the ploughed and watered earth, to bring forth fruit in due season.

He replaced the little book in its case, wrapped it again in its tissue paper, and, for the present, lodged it within the ample breast of his coat. He had never in his life heard Rosalie give expression to one fine heroic sentiment, such as fell plenteously from the lips of India, as the pearls and diamonds from the fairy favoured maiden of the child's story. But now he could not suppress the painful regret that the brilliant and enthusiastic India had not possessed more of the tenderness, sympathy, and real independence, found in the fragile, retired Rosalie.

It were tedious, as needless, to follow Mr. Sutherland through all the multifarious and harassing details of business that filled up the next few weeks. His path was full of difficulties. Not only social and domestic discouragements, and legal obstacles and

delays, but difficulties that arose on the part of the negroes themselves. A few of them did not want the old state of things, with its familiar associations, and close attachments, broken up. Some of them, who were anxious to be free, had wives and children, or husbands, upon some neighbouring plantation, and so were held bound by their affections. Nay, indeed, often a mere fraternal love was sufficient to produce this effect. This class of negroes, proved to be a great trial and vexation to Mark, not only by throwing nearly insurmountable obstacles in the way of their own emancipation, but also affording his opponents much material for laughter. It was in vain their benefactor told these men, that, after a few years of labour and saving, they would be able to purchase their wives or children. They shook their heads—they feared—their spirits were too faint. As far as his means would go, Mr. Sutherland purchased these wives or children, and sent them off with their husbands and fathers.

At length, it was all over—the slaves were emancipated and gone, each with a sum of money to pay their transport, and provide their immediate necessities, until they should find work. Many misgivings troubled the head of Mr. Sutherland, as to whether they would do well with the liberty, so unaccustomed, and so newly given; but no doubts as to the righteousness of his own act ever crossed his mind. And so he committed the result to Providence.

He had taken care to secure the homestead to his mother. For her benefit, he had also placed at interest thirty thousand dollars, which, at six per cent., would yield her an income of eighteen hundred.

Having thus wound up his business, he went over to Cashmere to seek an interview—a *farewell* interview—with his mother and relatives. He learned that they had, a few days before, left Cashmere for the North.

The next morning, Mark Sutherland, with only ninety dollars in his pocket-book, with his wardrobe and his law books, departed from his childhood's home.

It may be as well to state here, that when the Sutherlands returned, in the autumn, Mrs. Sutherland, with some ten or twelve slaves, her own personal property, took up her abode at Silentshades, availed herself of the income her son had secured to her, and made herself comfortable.

CHAPTER VIII.

FAREWELL.

"Fair wert thou in the dreams
Of early life, thou land of glorious flowers,
And summer winds, and low-toned silvery streams,
Dim with the shadow of thy laurel bowers.

"Fair wert thou, with the light
On thy blue hills and sleepy waters cast
From purple skies, soft deepening into night,
Yet slow as if each moment was their last
Of glory waning fast!"—*Hemans.*

THE sun was rising in cloudless splendour, on the morning on which Mark Sutherland paused upon an

eminence, to throw a farewell glance over the beautiful scenes of his childhood and youth—the fair valley of the Pearl. East lay the dark boundary of the pine forest, pierced by the golden, arrow-like rays of the level sun, or casting long, spear-like shadows athwart the green alluvion—south and west, belts of forest alternated with gaudy cotton-fields, and rolling green hills, interspersed with graceful groves, until in softly-blended hues they met the distant horizon. From this beautifully-variegated circumference, his eye returned to gaze upon the centre of the scene—the Pearl—the lovely river which took its name from the semi-transparent hues of clouded saffron, rose, and azure, that seemed not only caught from the glorious sky above, and the gorgeous hills, and fields, and grove, around, but flashed up from the deep channel of the stream, as if its clear waters flowed through a bed of opal.

At some distance below him, encircled by a bend of the river, lay—like some rich mosaic on the bosom of the vale—"Cashmere," the almost Oriental scene of his youthful love-dream. There was the pebbly beach, with its miniature piers and fairy boats—the lawn, with its flowering and fragrant groves, its crystal founts, its shaded walks and vine-clad arbours; and, nearer the house, the rose terrace, with its millions of odoriferous budding and blooming roses, surrounding as within a crimson glow, that white villa and its colonnade of light Ionic shafts. At this distance, he could see distinctly the bay window, with its purple curtains, of India's boudoir; and, at its sight, the image of the beautiful India arose before him. Again he saw her in that poetic harmony of form and colour-

ing that had so ravished his artist soul—the slender, yet well-rounded figure—the warm, bright countenance, with its amber-hued ringlets, and clear olive complexion deepening into crimson upon cheeks and lips—a beauty in which there was no strong contrast, but all rich harmony—a form that he once had fondly thought clothed a soul as harmonious as beautiful. They were lost! all lost—home, and bride, and lovely dreams of youth! Do not despise him, or blame him, when I tell you, in the touching words of Scripture, "that he lifted up his voice and wept." He was but twenty-one, and this was the first despairing passionate sorrow of his youth.

It is very easy to talk and write of the "rewards of virtue," the comfort of a good conscience, the delights of duty. Alas! I am afraid the delights of duty are seldom believed in, and seldomer experienced. Be sure, when a great sacrifice of interest, of affection, of hope, is made, and a great sorrow is felt—nothing —*nothing* but a loving, Christian faith can console.

And Mark Sutherland was not a Christian man.

Here, then, even a philanthropist might reasonably inquire *why* all this was done? *Why* a youth, born and brought up a slaveholder, should, against preconceived ideas, against prudence, against self-interest, against hope, with doubtful good even to the beneficiaries of his self-devotion, beggar himself for the sake of their emancipation? Why he, being no Christian, should make such an immense sacrifice of wealth, position, affection, hope—in short, of all temporal and earthly interests?

We are all able to answer, that, had a scientific phrenologist examined the moral organs of Mark

Sutherland's head, he would have found his answer in the predominant CONSCIENTIOUSNESS. It was, therefore, only a severe sense of justice that laid its iron hand upon him, obliging him to do as he had done—a single sense of justice, such as might have influenced the actions of a Pagan or an Atheist—a hard, stern sense of justice, without faith, hope, or love—an uncompromising sense of justice, without self-flattery, promise, or comfort.

He is not as yet a Christian, but he may become one, he must become one, for no great sacrifice was ever made to duty, without Christ claiming that redeemed soul as his own.

After all, perhaps, there is but one sin and sorrow in the world—IDOLATRY—and all forms of evil are compromised within it. It includes all shades of sin, from the lightest error that clouds the conscience, to the darkest crime that brings endless night upon the soul; and all degrees of suffering, from the discontent that disturbs the passing hour, to the anguish and despair that overwhelms and swallows up all the hopes of life. We are all idolaters. Some god-passion of the heart is ever the deity we worship. Ambition, avarice, love—"the world, the flesh, or the devil," in some form, is always the idol. Perhaps, love; the first, the most disinterested, self-devoted, of all the forms of idolatry, comes nearest to the true worship. But it is not the true worship—by all the anguish that it brings, it is not the true worship.

Oh! if but for a moment we could raise our souls to God, in the self-surrender wherewith, in passionate devotion, we throw our hearts beneath the feet of some weak and perishable form of clay—*that* were

conversion—that were regeneration—that were a great deliverance—that were eternal life, and full of joy!

And are there not moments when we catch a glimpse of such a possibility? when brain and heart stand still, thoughtless, breathless? when life itself pauses in the transient revelation of such unsufferable light? And we know that some have entered in and lived this light all the days of their lives. To many of us, alas! and in most of our moods, they seem to live in an unknown world—to speak in an unknown tongue.

Who of us has not occasionally experienced these thoughts and emotions, in reading and meditating on the lives and characters of Christians of *any name?*—it matters little what; for there is a unity of spirit in all regenerated children of God, of every nation, rank, or *sect.* Fenelon and George Whitefield—the Frenchman and the Briton—the mitred archbishop and the poor field preacher—the Roman Catholic and the Methodist, dwelt in the same light, spoke the same language, because both were one in spirit. What if through the medium of each separate brain, the theology look different? The heart is greater than the brain; or, in other words, the affections are higher than the intellect. "Out of the *heart* are the issues of life;" and "*this* is life eternal, that we should know the true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent." With their hearts, their affections, they discerned Him. And in love they were one with each other, and one with Christ and God. And who, in communing with their fervent souls—in meditating on their perfect faith and love—perfect devotion to God,

has not been startled by some such light as this let in upon the mind?—"Why, if this unfailing love—this unwavering faith—this unreserved devotion—this total self-surrender—be the worship we owe to our Creator, then have we been idolaters; for all this instinct and power, and *necessity* of loving, sacrificing, and worshipping has been ours, and has been lavished, wasted, only on the creature."

Akin to this was the feeling that impelled the dying Wolsey to exclaim, "Had I but served God as diligently as I have served the king, He would not have given me over in my grey hairs."

And as Mark Sutherland stood gazing in bitterness of spirit upon the beautiful scene of his love and joy, the maddening scene of his trial and suffering, these words escaped from his bursting heart: "Oh, God! if I had worshipped thee as I worshipped *her*, Thy beautiful work, I had not been now alone—alone in my sorrow."

It was the sincere, earnest cry of a stricken, penitent, suffering heart.

It was answered then and there. Around him fell an influence sober and more genial than sunshine—more refreshing than dew—a spiritual influence, warming, renewing, supporting—a Divine influence, kindling and strengthening the soul within him.

The Comforter had come, and was acknowledged. With uncovered head, and uplifted heart, then and there Mark Sutherland consecrated his life to the service of God, and His work on earth.

From the beautiful vale he turned, and, inspired by new strength and courage, put spurs to his horse, and galloped rapidly on towards the road leading to

the town of C——, where, six weeks since, he had parted with Lauderdale. He reached C—— in time for an early breakfast. Here—not wishing to leave his family in ignorance of his fate, and by his departure thus to cut down the bridge of communication between them and himself—he addressed a letter to his bachelor uncle, Paul Sutherland, informing him that his destination was some north-western town, whence, as soon as he should become settled, he should write. He gave this letter in charge of the landlord, to be forwarded as soon as his uncle should return from the North. He then mounted his horse, and took the road to Natchez, whence he intended to embark in a steamboat up the Mississippi. He reached the city by nightfall, and found his baggage, sent by the stage-coach, had arrived in safety. He took the boat that passed that night; and the next morning he found himself many miles on his way up the river.

"The world was all before him, where to choose
His place of rest, and Providence his guide."

And to a young, adventurous, hopeful spirit, this uncertainty, joined to liberty, was not without its peculiar charm. During the greater part of the day he remained on deck, with a spy-glass in his hand, examining the face of the country on either side of the river. The lawns and villages on the Lower Mississippi did not attract him in the least degree. Their situations were low—their beach sluggishly washed by the thick and murky water—their thoroughfare wet and muddy—their general aspect unwholesome to the last degree.

But, farther up the river, and above the mouth of the

Ol.o, the country and the colour of the water began to change. High bluffs, gray old rocks, and gigantic woods, diversified the shores—crystal creeks and verdant islets varied the river. He approached the fine "Rock River country."

Beautiful as a poetic vision of Elysium, had seemed the luxurious valley of the Pearl.

But this gigantic scene—Rock River, Rock Island, with the opposite shores of the Mississippi, widening here into a lake-like expanse—had a breadth of grandeur, a Titanic vigour and vitality of beauty, the most consonant, the most imposing and encouraging, to his own young energetic spirit.

The boat stopped opposite the village of S——, just as the morning mist was rolling away before the sun, and revealing the scene in all its picturesque beauty, and fresh life. The young city was but two years old—yet, infant of the Titaness West, it was growing and thriving most vigorously. Here, then, Mark Sutherland determined to take up his abode—here to live and labour. He ordered his baggage into the boat, and stepped in after it, and was swiftly rowed to the shore. Here, too, in order to begin aright and betimes, he shouldered his own trunk, while a porter followed with his box of books, and wended his way to the hotel on the hill.

CHAPTER IX.

THE FATAL MARRIAGE.

"*Isabella*—'Tis a babbling world."—*Fatal Marriage.*
"*Mr. Graves.*—Oh! 'tis an atrocious world!
(It will be burnt up one day—that's a comfort.)"—*Money.*

EIGHTEEN months have passed since Mark Sutherland left his home. Eighteen months of persevering study, of unsuccessful effort, and of varied wanderings, find him, at the close, in Cincinnati, quite penniless, and nearly hopeless. His efforts to find employment here are unavailing. He has not even the means to pay his board—a situation in which many a worthy and promising young man has found himself, who has afterwards nevertheless risen to fame or fortune. Embarrassing and discouraging enough is the position while occupied, however piquant to look back upon.

In a listless and disappointed mood, Mark Sutherland entered the reading-room of the hotel, and, taking up the daily papers, began to look over their columns, to see if any new want of a clerk or an agent had been advertised, which might hold out the hope of employment to him. At last, in the Intelligencer, his eye lighted upon an advertisement for a classical and mathematical teacher. The candidate was required to produce the highest testimonials of character and competency, and requested to apply through the office of that paper. Mr. Sutherland's classical and mathematical attainments were far above mediocrity, and

the references he could give were unexceptionable. He felt therefore certain of being able to offer more than an equivalent for the salary. He saw, too, that the office of a teacher, by leaving him many hours of the day, and the whole of Saturdays and holidays free, would afford him ample leisure for the pursuit of his legal studies.

He called for writing materials, and immediately wrote and mailed a letter of application. He was scarcely anxious about the result—only a little interested to know whether he should get the situation, and what sort of a one it would be, when it was got; whether it would be the place of assistant in a public academy, or that of tutor in a private family; also, whether his temporary home should be in the cold North or the sunny South, the populous East or the sparsely-settled West, or in the indefinite country between them; lastly, with what sort of people he should find himself.

But, upon the whole, he scarcely hoped to get a response to his application, as the paper containing the advertisement was several days old when he first saw it. Therefore, when days passed into weeks, and weeks became a month, he gave up all hopes of obtaining an answer, without much disappointment.

At length—as generally happens after expectation sickens and dies, and is buried—the unlooked-for letter arrived. It contained a proposition from Colonel Ashley, of Virginia, to engage Mr. Sutherland as private tutor, to prepare his two younger sons for the university, offering, in remuneration, a very liberal salary, and requesting, in the event of Mr. Sutherland's

acceptance, that he would reply promptly, and follow his own letter in person as soon as possible.

Mark sat down and wrote at once, closing the contract, and promising to be at Ashley by the first of March.

It was now near the last of February. He sold his horse, paid his bill at the hotel, and having money enough remaining to take him to Virginia, left the same afternoon by the steamboat up the river, and met the stage at Wheeling. After two or three days' travelling upon the turnpike road, through the most sublime and beautiful mountain and valley scenery in the world, he arrived, late one evening, at the little hamlet of Ashley, situated in a wild and picturesque gap of the Blue Ridge.

Here, at the little inn, he ordered supper, and purposed to spend the night. But he had scarcely entered the little bed-room allotted to him, with the intention of refreshing himself with ablutions and a change of dress, before the head of the host was put through the door, and the information given that Colonel Ashley's carriage had come to meet Mr. Sutherland, and was waiting below. He finished his toilet, however, before leaving his room.

He found the parlour occupied by two boys, of about thirteen and fifteen years of age, disputing the possession of a pistol, which, in the wrestle that ensued, went off—harmlessly. And before Mark could reprove them for their imprudence, they came to meet him. The elder lad, cap in hand, inquired, respectfully—

"Are you Mr. Sutherland, sir?"

"Yes, my son; have you business with me?"

"Father has sent the carriage for you, sir—that is all. My name is Henry—he's Richard. St. Gerald, you know, is in Washington. He is in Congress, you know, and has made a great speech—father says, one of the greatest speeches that has been made since"—

"*Oh, sho!* He's a great deal older than we are, Mr. Sutherland; and he's only our half-brother besides. *You* don't know every thing," said the younger boy Richard, addressing the last phrase, accompanied by a punch in the side, to his brother.

"I am happy to meet you, Henry—how do you do, Richard?" said Mr. Sutherland, giving a hand to each of the boys.

"And so," he added, smiling to himself, and at them, "this new star of the Capitol—this eloquent and admired St. Gerald Ashley—is a relative of yours?"

"Our brother," said Henry.

"Our *half*-brother," amended Richard, favouring his senior with another malicious punch in the ribs.

Hereupon another scuffle ensued, which Mr. Sutherland ended, by saying—

"Come—shall we go on to Ashley Hall, or will you take supper first, here, with me?"

"Take supper first here, with you," assented the boys, who could have been tempted by nothing but the novelty to forego their father's sumptuous supper-table for this poor tavern meal.

"It was kind to come and meet me. But how did you guess that I should arrive *this* evening?"

"Oh, we did not guess. Father thought it about time you should come, and he sent the carriage, and intended to send it every stage-day until you *did* come,

or write, or something. Father would have come himself, only he staid home to read St. Gerald's great speech."

"St. Gerald" was evidently the hero of Henry's worship.

While they supped, their horses were fed and watered. And, half an hour afterwards, Mr. Sutherland and his pupils entered the carriage, and were driven to Ashley Hall. It was quite dark when the carriage drew up before the door of a large, rumbling old building of red sandstone, scarcely to be distinguished from the irregular masses of rock rising behind and around it. A bright light illumined the hall, where the travellers were received by a negro man in waiting, who would have conducted them into a drawing-room on the left, but that Henry and Richard, breaking violently forward, threw open the door upon the right, exclaiming—

"Father is here. He is come, father! We found him at the village."

A genial wood fire blazed and crackled in the wide, old-fashioned chimney of this room; and near it, in an easy chair, beside a candlestand, sat an old gentleman, engaged in reading a newspaper. No whit disturbed by the boisterous onslaught of the boys, he calmly laid aside his paper and stood up—an undersized, attenuated old man, with a thin, flushed face, and a head of hair as white and soft as cotton wool. He stood, slightly trembling with partial paralysis, but received Mr. Sutherland with the fine courtesy of an old-school gentleman.

The boys hurried about their own business.

The man-servant placed an arm chair for Mr.

Sutherland. And when the latter was fairly seated, the old gentleman resumed his own seat, and inquired whether his guest had supped. Being answered in the affirmative, he nevertheless ordered refreshments to be served there.

A stand, with wine, sandwiches, cake, and fruit was placed between them; and while they discussed these, the old gentleman, in an indifferent sort of manner, said—

"By the way, Mr. Sutherland, have you seen Monday's paper, with the debate on the tariff? Here it is; take it—look over it. Never mind me, I would prefer that you should see it now. If any thing *strikes* you, just read it aloud, will you?"

Mark took the paper, but found the "debate" to be all on one side, and in the mouth of one individual, to wit—the Hon. St. Gerald Ashley, of Virginia. He ran his eye over it—the old man fingering cheese and crackers, and pretending to eat, not to interrupt him. "Do you wish me to read this *debate* aloud, sir?" asked Mark, benevolently inclined to indulge the aged father's pride.

"Yes, yes," said the old man, smiling, nodding, and crumbling soda crackers; "yes, if it will not tire you."

"Oh, by no means," answered Mark; and forthwith began.

The celebrated speech was, indeed, a master-piece of legislative oratory; and Mark Sutherland was an admirable elocutionist. He read, became deeply interested and absorbed, and before long was betrayed, by the old man's enthusiasm and his sympathy, into declamation, interrupted now and then by Colonel

Ashley's exclaiming, "*That's* it! hear, hear. *That must* have brought down the House! I wonder what the Democrats will find to say to *that!*"

Finally, laughing at the fever into which he had worked himself and his hearer, Mark finished the speech, and laid down the paper. It was time—it was past eleven o'clock—late hours for country people, and far too late for the aged and infirm.

"Thank you, sir. Thank you. You have given me a treat. It was as good as if I had heard it spoken," said the old man, flushing with pride and pleasure. Soon after, he rang for night lamps, and a servant to show Mr. Sutherland to his room.

Early next morning, Mark Sutherland arose and left his bed-room. The family were not yet stirring; none but the house servants were about. And with the restlessness of a heart ill at ease, he walked out upon the piazza, to find diversion from the bitter retrospections of the past, and gloomy forebodings of the future, in the novel aspect of the country around him.

To one used to the undulating, luxurious beauty of southern scenery, there was something startling and inspiring in the abrupt, stern, rugged, yet vigourous and productive aspect of this mountainous region.

The Ashley plantation filled the whole of a small valley, shut in between two curving spurs of the Alleghanies, and watered by a branch of the Rappahannock. The Ashley house, an irregular but massive building of red sandstone, was situated at the foot of the mountain; behind it arose hoary rocks, intermingled or crowned by dark evergreens of pine and cedar; before it, at some distance, flowed the branch

around on every side within the vale were gardens, shrubberies, orchards, wheat and corn fields; and here and there, picturesquely placed, or half concealed by trees or jutting rocks, were the negro quarters; while more conspicuously, in the midst of the open fields, stood the barns and granaries. Altogether, the plantation, occupying the whole valley, and completely shut in by mountains, was an independent, isolated, little domain in itself.

Now, upon the second day of March, the grass along the margin of the branch was already fresh and verdant, and the wheat fields sprouting greenly. The morning was very bright and fresh, and Mark walked into the garden that lay to the left of the house. There he found three or four negroes, under the direction of the gardener, engaged in clearing up beds, tying vines, trimming trees, and repairing arbours and garden seats.

This place had not the luxurious beauty of the south, nor the fresh and vigorous life of the west; yet there was a solid, jolly, old homeliness about it, very comfortable even in contrast to those other scenes. Mark felt this, while alternately talking with the old gardener or contemplating the old home.

He was interrupted by an irruption of that Goth and Vandal, Henry and Richard Ashley, who, rushing upon him, seized the one his right hand and the other his left, and boisterously informed him that breakfast was ready, and had "been waiting ever so long."

He returned their vehement greeting good-humouredly, and accompanied them into the house, and to the breakfast-table, which was set in the old oak

parlour where he had passed the preceding evening.

Two ladies, in simple, graceful, morning dresses of white cambric, sat near the fire, occupied with a little delicate needlework; Colonel Ashley stood with his back to the chimney, with *the* paper in his hand, and talking to them about *the* speech.

On seeing Mr. Sutherland, the old gentleman immediately stepped forward, welcomed him, and conducted him to the ladies, saying, "My dears, this is Mr. Sutherland; Mr. Sutherland, my"——

But before another syllable was spoken, the elder lady had lifted her face, started up with a blush of pleasure, and extended her hand, exclaiming—

"Mark Sutherland! Is it possible!"

"Mrs. Vivian! Miss Vivian!" exclaimed Mark, extending a hand to each, impulsively.

"Why, how strange that we should meet here!" said Valeria.

"A most pleasant surprise, indeed!" responded Mark.

"The surprise as well as the pleasure is mutual, I assure you! But how did it happen?"

"I am sure I do not know."

"Nor I. Can *you* guess, Rose?" and Mrs. Vivian turned to her step-daughter, who remained silent, with her fingers in the unconscious clasp of Mark Sutherland's hand.

"I inquired only in jest, but now I really do believe you could tell us something about this," persisted the lady, looking intently at the maiden.

Rosalie's pale face slightly flushed; she withdrew her hand, resumed her seat, and took up her work.

Colonel Ashley, if he *felt*, certainly *expressed* no surprise at this re-union; but as, with stately courtesy he handed his niece to the head of the table, said, "As Mrs. Vivian arrived only yesterday afternoon, and retired at once to rest from the fatigue of her journey, and as Mr. Sutherland reached here last night, there has been no time for conversation about our arrangements."

"Ah, yes; that's all very well; but you'll never make me believe that Rose is not at the bottom of this, somehow," laughed the widow, shaking her jetty curls as she sat down at the table. Her eyes met those of Rosalie for an instant, and the spirit of mischief was quelled. She became silent on that topic, and soon after changed the subject, entering into gay conversation about St. Gerald Ashley and his sudden fame.

When breakfast was over, Colonel Ashley invited Mr. Sutherland to accompany him to his study, where he began to unfold his plan for the education of his boys. After hearing him through, Mark inquired when he should enter upon his new duties, and requested to defer the commencement until Monday, and to use the intervening time to become acquainted with his home and pupils.

The interview then closed. Both gentlemen descended the stairs. Colonel Ashley told Mr. Sutherland that he would find the ladies in the parlour, and then, excusing himself, bade him good morning, and entered the carriage, which was waiting to take him to the village.

Mark opened the parlour door, advanced into the room, and before he could retreat, saw and heard the

fragment of an earnest interview between the mother and daughter. Mrs. Vivian sat upon the sofa, her head bent, her jetty curls drooping, her jetty eye-lashes and rosy cheeks sprinkling and sparkling with tear-drops, like morning dew upon a fresh flower. She was nimbly and nervously stitching away at a piece of muslin embroidery.

Rosalie sat on a cushion before her, with her hands and her needlework fallen idly on her lap, and her pale hair fallen back from her paler, upturned brow, and earnest eyes, that were fixed upon her mother's. She was asking in open accents, "Oh, mamma! can this be possible?"

"Not only possible, but true, Rose," replied the lady, dashing the sparkling tears away.

"Oh, mamma! do not let him meet such a shock; prepare him for it, mamma."

"I cannot; how could I? Hush—here he is," said she, perceiving Mark. And in an instant, presto! all was changed.

Smiling out from her tears, like an April sun from a cloud, or a blooming rose scattering its dew in the breeze, she looked up and said, "Come in, Mark; draw that easy chair up here to the sofa, and sit down, for I know by experience that men are lazy as the laziest women."

Mr. Sutherland took the indicated seat. Miss Vivian started from her lowly position, resuming her place upon the sofa, drawing the foot-cushion under her feet, and arranging her needlework.

"It is really surprising that we should all meet here so unexpectedly in Alleghany county," said Mrs. Vivian.

"I certainly had not anticipated such a pleasure. I did not know that you were related to Colonel Ashley, or to any one else in this part of the country."

"Nor am I. Colonel Ashley is Rosalie's great uncle—her mother's uncle. Colonel Ashley's last remaining single daughter was married last year, and Rosalie was invited to take her abdicated place in his household. Physicians recommended the bracing air of the mountains for my delicate girl, and therefore Rosalie has been living here for the last eighteen months—ever since we left Cashmere, in fact. Last winter, I think, was rather too cold for her here on the mountains. I spent the season in Washington, from whence I have just returned; but next winter I intend to take Rose to Louisiana with me, and make an arrangement by which she can spend all her winters in the south."

"Indeed, mamma, you shall not immolate your happiness upon my ill health. You shall just spend your winters in Washington, where you enjoy life so much, and your summers at the watering-places, where you meet again your gay and brilliant friends. I shall do well enough. You shall visit me in the spring and autumn intervals."

"Oh, a truce, Rosalie! We shall be set down as a model mother and daughter. *I* know, for *one*, selfishness is the mainspring of all my acts. I rather think I like you, child, and prefer to see you well. There! I declare there's Robert with the horses already. Put on your cloth habit, Rosalie; the morning is really cold; and don't let him take you far, child; these hearty men have very little instinctive mercy for de-

licate girls, and he would not imagine he had tired you to death till you had dropped from your horse."

Rosalie arose, rolled up her work, and left the room, nodding and smiling to a young man who entered as she left. "Mr. Bloomfield," said the lady, presenting him to Mr. Sutherland. Mr. Bloomfield was a sufficiently pleasing specimen of a well-bred, country beau—moderately tall, broad-shouldered, and deep-chested—with regular features—fresh, ruddy complexion—clear, merry blue eyes—and lips, whose every curve expressed the good humour and benevolence of a kind, contented heart.

"You mustn't take Rose far, Robert."

"I will take her only to mother's."

"And you sha'n't teaze her with any more nonsense! I can't put up with that, you know."

Robert Bloomfield blushed violently, smiled till all his regular white teeth shone, and was stammering out a blundering deprecation, when, to his great relief, Rosalie appeared, attired for the ride. The young man arose, Mrs. Vivian surveyed Rose, to be sure she was well defended from the cold, and finally yielded her in charge of her escort, who bowed and took her out.

Mrs. Vivian and Mark looked at them through the window, saw him place her in the saddle with more than polite attention—with a careful and tender solicitude that made her smile. When they had ridden off, she turned to Mark, and said—

"I like that good humoured, blundering boy. He has been paying court to Rose ever since she has been here. He is a young man of independent fortune, irreproachable character, fair education, and most ex-

cellent disposition, and he has loved Rose for more than a year. Yet, with all, he is not worthy of her! he wants polish—the polish that nothing but intercourse with refined society can give him. He came to see me last winter in Washington, got fitted out by a fashionable tailor, and I good-naturedly took him with me to an evening party. If ever I do such a thing again as long as I live may——; but never mind! Just think, when I presented him to a superfine belle, of his holding out his hands to shake hands with her, telling her he was glad to see her, and hoping that if ever she passed through his part of the country, she would pay his mother and sisters a visit, &c. And then, when the elegant Mrs. A. inquired if Mr. Bloomfield waltzed, just fancy him blushing furiously, and saying that he would rather not—that he disapproved of waltzing!"

"Well!" said Mrs. Vivian, looking up, after a pause.

"Yes—well?" inquired her companion, raising his eyebrows.

"You have not made a single comment upon my country beau. I see how it is. You're thinking of your relatives. Mark, you must question me if you want me to tell you anything."

"My mother"—began the young man.

"She is living very comfortably with her husband at Cashmere."

"With her husband!"

"Is it possible you did not know she was married, Mark?"

"I never knew it—I never dreamed it—I never

thought it possible." He looked shocked—he *was* shocked.

"And why not?" asked the lady, with a little jealous petulance. "Why may not a widow remarry?"

"Nay—I do not know, I'm sure," said Mr. Sutherland, with his eyebrows still raised, and his eyes fixed upon the floor. "My mother married! Will you please tell me to whom?"

"To whom? Oh, of course you know, Mark. Now, who was it likely to be, but Dr. Wells?"

"Our old family physician!"

"Why of course. You know he had been pleased with her a long time."

"That my mother should have married!"

"She never would have done so, Mark, had you not left her."

"And she is happy, you say?"

"Comfortable, Mark. Your mother and Dr. Wells make what Tim Linkenwater calls 'a comfortable couple.'"

"I am not so much grieved as surprised," said Mr. Sutherland. And after a short pause he said, "There was another—my cousin."

The face of the lady grew troubled—she did not speak.

"Is *India* well?" again spake Mark, in a faltering voice.

"India is well, and beautiful as ever. She was the belle of Washington last winter—her beauty the theme of every tongue—the envy of every woman, the madness of every man. No assembly was complete without 'the Pearl of Pearl River!'"

Mark Sutherland grew pale, and shivered—saying, "Of course she"——

"Among her own sex there was no rival star. She divided public interest and attention only with St. Gerald Ashley, that great new planet on the political horizon."

Mark Sutherland's whole strong frame was convulsed. He started up and paced the floor in extreme agitation—then, seizing his hat, rushed out of the room.

"And *I* was to prepare him for it, said Rosalie!" exclaimed Mrs. Vivian, looking after him, as the pity of her heart grew strong.

CHAPTER X.

ROSALIE AND HER LOVER.

"She loves, but 'tis not him she loves—
Not him on whom she ponders,
When in some dream of tenderness
Her truant fancy wanders.
The forms that flit her vision through
Are like the shapes of old,
Where tales of prince and paladin
On tapestry are told.
Man may not hope her heart to win,
Be his of common mould."—*C. F. Hoffman.*

In the meantime, the two young riders took their way up a narrow bridle-path, leading up a long crooked pass of the mountain.

The morning was glistening with brightness and

freshness, and the mingled joyous sounds of rural life made music in the air. They rode along awhile in silence, strange enough in a pair so youthful. At length the young man broke the spell.

"Rose!"

"Well, Robert!"

"I cannot bear this suspense! I cannot, indeed. Heart and frame are wearing out with it!"

Rosalie stole a glance at his clear, bright blue eye, and round, fresh, ruddy cheek, looking still brighter and fresher under the glossy, crisp, curling, auburn hair—and a smile lighted up her countenance.

"Ah! you may laugh! You have the hardest, the most unimpressible heart I ever saw in my life! But good and strong as my constitution is, it will break down—it will indeed, Rosalie—if you keep this up much longer. And I wish it *would* break down! I do so! Then perhaps you would pity me."

"But, Robert, my pity would be very poor compensation for lost health."

"I don't know! If I could make you feel for me any way, or at any cost, I should be glad."

"I *do*, Robert. I feel a very sincere esteem and friendship for you. Surely you cannot doubt that."

"Oh! yes, you are good to me to a certain degree. Your heart is like a peach!"

"Like a peach!"

"Yes; it is superficially soft and impressible, but the core of it is hard and rough—hard and rough! Oh, Rosalie, can't you *try* to like me a little?"

"I like you very much without trying!"

"Oh, you know what I mean, you tormenting girl!

Can't you—you—can't you love me well enough to be my own? Speak! Answer! Tell me, Rose!"

"Oh, Robert, how many times have I told you—no?"

"I—but I won't take no for an answer! All my affections and hopes are freighted in you, and I *will not* resign you; I *will not*, Rose. I will go on hoping in spite of you—hoping against hope! It is *impossible*—mind I say *impossible*—any one loving as I do, should not win love in return. It does seem to me as if it would be unjust in heaven to permit it!"

He spoke with impatient, passionate vehemence and earnestness.

Rosalie watched and heard him with wondering and sorrowing interest. She gravely said—

"'It is impossible that one loving so much should not win love in return,' you say? Yes, it *does* seem impossible, if we did not know it to be often really possible. It *does* seem unjust!"

"You acknowledge it! You own it to be unjust that I should give you so much—give you *all*—my entire heart, with all its affections and hopes—and get back nothing, *nothing* in return—or next to it—only 'esteem,' forsooth! and 'friendship!' That provokes and exasperates me beyond endurance! Rosalie, I don't want your esteem or friendship. I refuse and repudiate it! I reject and repulse it! I will have none of it! Give me *nothing*, or give me your whole heart and hand!"

"I would to Heaven I could do it, Robert! I would to Heaven I could give you my heart. I am ready to say that if I could, I should then be a happy and enviable girl; because I believe you a most excellent young man, whose only weakness is your regard for

me. But I cannot, Robert. With all my friendship for you"—

"*Don't* name it!"

"I must, Robert! With all my friendship for you, when you talk of love, my heart grows hard and cold, and silent as a stone—it has no response for you at all."

"And you say that to drive me out of my senses—to make me wild!"

"I say it because it is the simple truth. I am sorry that such *is* the truth. I think, with you, it is strange—strange—almost unjust, that so much priceless love should be thrown away."

"How cool she is! Good Heaven, how cool she is!"

"I have a problem for you, Robert; and I want to see if, with all your mathematics, you can solve it, and satisfy me as to why there is so much love lost in this world."

"She can philosophise, too, after her fashion. She can do anything but love!"

"Will you solve my problem?"

"It belongs rather to metaphysics than mathematics, one would think—nevertheless, state it."

"Thus, then: A loves B—or rather, to be clearer, Aaron loves Belinda with a perfect passion; and he thinks, by reason of its great power, it *must* win a response from her. But Belinda involuntarily turns from Aaron, and fixes her affection upon Charles, who does not in the least return it. Now, why should these cross purposes exist? They say that marriages are made in heaven. I wish the angel that has charge of them would look into this matter a little."

She spoke in a light, bantering manner, yet her voice quivered slightly. She stole an arch glance at her companion, and said—

"There is my problem—solve it."

He eyed her closely, jealously.

"Are you putting an imaginary case?" he asked.

"Nay, answer my question before asking another."

"Well, then, yes! I *will* tell you how this ought to end, and how it *shall* end, too. Belinda will soon feel it to be unwomanly, indelicate, undignified, to leave her heart in the possession of one who undervalues the priceless treasure; she will withdraw it, and yield it up at the demand of the rightful owner—of him who *justly* claims it because he prizes it above all treasures, and desires it above all possessions!"

"You think so?" said Rosalie, averting her face, and bending down, and stroking her horse's mane.

"I *know* so."

"How do you know it?"

"Because it *ought* to be so."

"Again—*why?*"

"Because *man's* love is the conquering love! But now, tell me—were you putting an imaginary case?"

"Yes, I was putting an imaginary case," she said, in a low, quiet tone.

She drew rein.

"What is the matter, Rosalie? Are you tired? Has the ride been too much for you?" inquired the young man, checking his horse, and looking anxiously at her.

"Yes, I think so," she answered, wearily.

"Rest awhile, and then we will go on."

"No—I must go home—the air is very chill," she said, shivering.

"And you are pale," he observed, gazing at her with earnest, affectionate interest.

She returned that gaze with a pensive, grateful glance, saying—"Indeed, I feel I ought to be very grateful to you for caring so much for a poor, sickly creature, like me. You in such fine health, too. I do not understand it. I thought every one preferred blooming girls; but you attach yourself to poor, pale me. Dear Robert, believe me, I am very, *very* grateful for your love, however this may end. I *do* wish I could be *more* than grateful. Dear Robert, if I could give you my whole heart as easily as I give you this rose, I would do it." And detaching a white rose from her bosom, she handed it to him.

And they turned their horses' heads, and went down the mountain path, towards home.

CHAPTER XI.

ROSALIE.

"Imagine something purer far,
More free from stain of clay,
Than friendship, love or passion are,
Yet human still as they.
And if thy lip for love like this
No mortal word can frame,
Go ask of angels what it is,
And call it by that name."—*Moore.*

ROSALIE VIVIAN and Robert Bloomfield reached home just as the carriage containing Colonel Ashley rolled into the yard. The old gentleman alighted, greeted the young people with a most cheerful and kindly smile, and with unusual vigour and lightness tripped up stairs into the house. His servant, laden with packets of newspapers and letters, followed.

"You may take my word for it, Rosalie, that the Colonel has received some excellent news by this morning's mail! And now just observe the power of the soul over the body! Joyful news will so rejuvenate infirm old age, that it will skip about, elastic as youth. Witness Colonel Ashley, who stepped up those stairs more lightly than I ever saw him move in my life; while disappointment and sorrow will so enfeeble youth that it will move about drooping like paralytic age. Witness me ready to drop from my saddle with exhaustion—from your unkindness, Rosalie!"

"I am not unkind, nor do you look very much

prostrated, let me say, Robert! But will you not come in?"

"No," mournfully replied the young man, assisting her to alight.

"You had better—we have strawberries for the first time this spring."

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Robert, with an offended air.

"Strawberries from uncle's premium conservatory, and cream from my own premium dairy; you had better think it over!"

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Robert, contemptuously.

"Oh, *then*, there's no more to be said, of course!"

"Good morning, Rosalie!"

"Good morning, Robert; but won't you shake hands with me?" she asked, offering her hand. He seized that little hand, and squeezed it and pressed it to his lips, and with an expression of curiously-blended deprecation and reproach, dropped it, mounted his horse, and galloped away.

Mrs. Vivian was standing dawdling with a white rose in the piazza. She came forward, with tender care, to meet Rosalie. "Did you ride far—are you tired, love?"

"Not very."

"But you look pale and wearied."

"A moment's rest will restore me, dear mamma."

"Come in and sit down, while I take off your things," said the kind little lady, leading her stepchild into the parlour. She sat her down in a deep-cushioned chair, rang the bell, ordered a cordial, and then removed her hat and riding skirt. When she had made Rosalie take a cracker and a little glass of

anise-seed cordial, and when the salver was removed, and they were left alone, Rosalie reclining upon the sofa, Valeria sitting in the easy chair near her, the lady inquired—

"Why did not Robert come in?"

"I do not know, unless it was because he did not wish to do so."

"Have you quarrelled?"

"Quarrelled! Dear mamma, I never had a quarrel with any one in all my life, and never expect to have one with anybody—least of all with Bob."

"That is no reason you should not have a lover's quarrel—*they* befall the most amiable pair. Is it so?"

"What, mamma?"

"Have you and Robert had a 'lover's quarrel?'"

"No, indeed—I assure you."

"Yet Robert went away offended—'in dudgeon,' as uncle would say."

Rosalie looked distressed. The lady eyed her searchingly.

"Rosalie, will you let me speak to you frankly, and ask you a few questions?"

"Certainly, dear mamma; I would turn my heart inside out, and show you its most hidden secret, if it had any secrets."

"Well, then, are you and Robert engaged?"

"No, mamma."

"He has not yet proposed, then?"

"I scarcely know, mamma, whether I ought to reveal poor Robert's confidences."

"Well?"

"Well, mamma!"

"You did not reject him?"

"Yes, madam."

"I'm astonished! How long ago has this been?"

"Dear mamma, twelve months ago Robert first did me the honour of offering his hand, and I gratefully declined it."

"Yet continued to keep his company! Oh, Rosalie! Well, has he ever renewed his proposals?"

"Yes, mamma, several times."

"And you have continued to reject them?"

"Of course, mamma."

"And yet you still accept his attentions! Oh, Rosalie!"

"Was I—am I wrong, mamma?" asked Rosalie, looking up from where she reclined upon the sofa.

The lady sat with her hands clasped upon her knees, in a simple attitude, with her eyes fixed in sorrowful doubt upon her child.

"Do you ever mean to review your decision, and accept him, Rosalie?"

"Never, mamma, I assure you!"

"Are you very certain, Rosalie?"

"Certain, dear mamma, beyond all possibility of doubt."

"If I could believe it"——

"Dear mamma, you may rest assured of it! Why, if I thought it was to be my fate to marry Robert Bloomfield, well as I like him, I think I should die of grief!"

"And yet you keep his company! Oh! Rosalie, I am surprised."

"Is it not right, mamma?"

"What a simple question! Oh, child! if it were not you, I should say it is unprincipled!"

"Mamma, you distress and alarm me! Why must I not keep poor Robert's company, when he takes so much comfort in my society?"

"Comfort! Does he take comfort—do you call it comfort? No, Rosalie, it is a feverish, consuming hope that keeps him at your side; a wasting, baleful hope, which, since you do not intend to realize to him, it is your bounden duty to extinguish forever!"

"Mamma! I do not quite understand you. I am sorry, very sorry, that I cannot return Robert's regard"——

"Oh!" exclaimed the lady, interrupting her, "I am not sorry for *that:* as to *that,* I am very glad you are not engaged to him, nor ever likely to be; but"——

"But why add to the grief of rejection the bitterness of ingratitude and coldness?"

"To refuse his attentions, to deny him your company, would not be either the one or the other, and it is your duty."

"When poor Robert has no consolation in the world but my company"——

"To say he has no other intoxication, would be nearer the truth. Rosalie, you are so young, so delicate, so *spirituelle,* so inexperienced. Rosalie, there is a kindness that is cruel, and that is what you have been showing 'poor Robert' all this time. And there is a cruelty that is kind, and that is what you must show him now."

"Mamma, if you think it wrong, I will never ride with him again."

"And avoid him as much as possible, Rosalie."

"Indeed I will, mamma. Poor Robert!"

"Fudge! It will not hurt him. The flame without fuel will soon expire harmlessly."

By this time the young girl had quite recovered from her fatigue, and she arose and left the room, to prepare her strawberries, she said.

She passed into a pleasant back room, connected with the pantry and dining-room, but opening upon the garden, and devoted to certain light dessert preparations; such as the shelling of peas, stoning of cherries, &c. It was a cool apartment, with a bare, white oak floor, and many doors and windows open, and looking out upon the pleasant garden, with its budding spring flowers—its roses, hyacinths, and daffodils—and upon the orchard, with its peach trees and cherry trees, covered with pink and with white blossoms, and further off, upon the green and dewy wheat field, lying in fertile dales between gray and mossy rocks and mountains. It was indeed a pleasant apartment, looking out upon a fresh, verdant, rural scene. Rosalie sat down in the midst of the room, with a basket of fresh strawberries on her right hand, an empty basket to receive the caps on her left, and a cut-glass dish on her lap. She chose to do this. She had a decided attraction to these little graceful domestic avocations; and as her nimble fingers capped the strawberries, and dropped berries in the dish, and threw caps in the basket, she began to sing some lively rural glee; and while she was busily engaged, singing and capping, she chanced to look up, and saw Mark Sutherland approaching the house from the garden. He met her glance, and smiled. She

was in a merry mood, or she would not have felt free to say to him what she did.

"Come in, Mr. Sutherland; I have got something for you, very nice!"

Mark came in, and she said, "Make a bowl of your joined hands, now, and here!"

She poured into his hands some fine large strawberries, adding,

"These are the first fruits of the season, Mr. Sutherland, and we offer them to you."

"Let me first merit them, by helping you," said Mark.

"Will you help me?"

"Certainly; that is, if I am not intruding on some housekeeping sanctuary."

"Oh, no! this room is open and common to the whole family; why, it is the pleasantest room in the house, only as it is near the pantry and dining-room, and opens upon the kitchen garden, we prepare our fruit, and sometimes pick over our vegetables here."

Mr. Sutherland drew a chair on the other side of the strawberry basket, and went to work—nobody could tell why—actuated by some whim, no doubt. After a little desultory conversation, Mr. Sutherland said,

"I believe, dear Rosalie, that I owe this situation to your friendly remembrance, and I have been waiting some hours for an opportunity of expressing my thanks."

Rosalie's face flushed to the temples.

"I am deeply obliged and grateful to my fair patroness."

The blush deepened, crimsoning her face. She

waved her hand deprecatingly, impatiently; she began —"Mr. Sutherland"—and stopped, as it were, choked.

"Miss Vivian, are you so unwilling to receive my acknowledgments? Then must my gratitude be silent, but not the less deep."

Again she essayed to speak, and the words came vehemently, impetuously.

"I had no agency in procuring this situation for you, Mr. Sutherland. How could you think for a moment that *I*, or any one else, could presume to 'patronize' *you* in such a manner? How could you suppose, for an instant, that I, or any one else that knew you, could deem this position a fit and proper one for you? No! could I have dared to interfere, it would have been to prevent your coming here."

There was a tone of honest, earnest indignation in her voice, looks, and manner, that utterly astounded Mark Sutherland. Could it be that she thought him unworthy of the position? No; he dismissed that surmise at once, and answered, quietly,

"I confess you surprise me, Rosalie! Is not the vocation of a teacher really honourable, if conventionally humble?"

"It is greater, higher, more difficult, more responsible, than any other, except that of the preacher of the Gospel!" answered the girl, earnestly.

"What is the matter, then—am I unfit for it?"

"Yes, you are totally unfit for it."

"Why?" smiled Mark; "has my education been neglected?"

"I know that you are a distinguished classical and mathematical scholar, Mr. Sutherland; and for any other branch of knowledge quite fitted to take a pro-

fessor's chair; but to be a teacher of youth requires other and rarer qualifications, which you have not."

"To wit?" inquired Mark, much amused with his young mentor.

"First, then, you should have a natural vocation for teaching, and consequently the love of it, which you have not; a great deal of affection for children, which you have not; much patience, perseverance, firmness, social humility, some of which qualities you have, and others you have not."

"I am tempted to ask you to specify which I have and which I have not, but I will not."

"I thought you were going to open a glorious career for yourself, and achieve a great name."

"In what manner?"

"I thought you were going to be a statesman."

"A *lawyer*, child."

"Why are you here, then, Mr. Sutherland? Why are you not a lawyer?"

"Rosalie, I made an effort, many an effort, to get admitted to practice, at the bar of S——. I had thought myself well qualified, for I had studied legal science with what you call an attraction—a vocation for the profession. For several years past I had read law *con amore;* yet, through the want of familiarity with the technicalities of practice, I failed to get admitted as a practitioner before the court."

"Then I would have gone into some lawyer's office, and assisted him as a copyist for nothing, until I had acquired an intimacy with those crabbed technicalities. It seems to me such a very trivial matter for an impediment. Why, there is your uncle, who is no lawyer, but who can draw up a right legal and binding

document, with as many 'whereases' and 'aforesaids' as ever made a composition unintelligible."

"My dear Rosalie, that would have been a very small beginning."

"'Despise not the day of small things,' said the wise man. And at least the lawyer's office would have been in the way of your genius; and to have entered it in the capacity of copyist would have been much better than to have turned into this by-path, which is utterly apart from it."

"There were difficulties in the way of even that, Rosalie."

"And even if there *were* difficulties, what then? We have no royal road to distinction in our country. We have no ready-made great men. None are 'born great;' none have 'greatness thrust upon them.' If any would be great, he must 'achieve greatness.' Nearly *all* of our heroes and statesmen have struggled up from the humblest places in society—have struggled up, alone and unaided, until they have proved their mettle; and the struggle has been wholesome for them, and has turned them out sound and healthful natures."

"You speak wisely and truly, dear Rosalie; yet each of all these men to whom you have alluded, had near and dear friends—mother, sisters, a wife, perhaps—to watch his career, and rejoice in it—to soothe him in moments of exasperation, from injustice, from opposition, from persecution, and to encourage him in hours of depression and despondency, when all his hopes and energies seemed palsied, and the wheels of life and action seemed clogged and stopped; and, finally, to share and enjoy his success, and to glory in

his triumph. Oh, believe me, Rosalie, man cannot work for himself alone! It were a low and selfish aim!"

"But he can work for humanity—he can work for God!" said Rosalie, in a low and reverent voice.

Mark Sutherland sat with his eyes fixed upon the ground, in deep thought. Rosalie continued—

"Attain a position, Mr. Sutherland—such a position as the prophetic voice in your heart foretels. Win fame! not for yourself, but for men and God! not for your own aggrandizement, but for the POWER to right the wronged, to raise the fallen, to deliver the oppressed, to redeem the evil, to speak with AUTHORITY the truth to men and before God! Labour, wait, struggle, for such a position, and, though no mother, sister, wife, or love, smile on your career, men and women will know it! God will bless it!"

Mark Sutherland still remained buried in deep and silent thought upon her words. Oh, if *India* had so spoken to him, so sympathized with his aspirations, so encouraged his flagging hopes and energies, what might he not have accomplished, even before this! But this child Rosalie was nothing, and yet she spoke words of high moment, and spoke them "as one having authority."

"You astonish me, Rosalie; you talk far beyond your years and sex; you really astound me."

"I wish I could convince you."

"You do, you do, my child. But, Rosalie, how is this? You must have reflected very much, for one of your tender years."

"I am not so young; I am seventeen."

"A venerable age, indeed. But, Rosalie, how is it

that you have thought so much beyond girls of your age?"

"Have I done so?"

"Why, assuredly—do you not know that you have? Now tell me how it is."

"Well, if it is so as you say—for *I* do not know and cannot judge of young people, having never had any young companions—I suppose it is because I have been always sickly, and have always led an isolated, meditative life; hearing in my secluded retreat only the loudest thunders of the distant great world of society, I have naturally thought most about its great successes, and how they were accomplished. I have watched from afar the career of living great men, and have secretly made unto myself idols like them. I have read with deep interest the lives of distinguished statesmen and heroes, particularly those who have struggled up from poverty and obscurity; that is the reason."

"Yet that is very unusual in so young and beautiful a girl. I cannot yet comprehend it—I can scarcely believe in it."

"The pleasures of childhood and girlhood were not for me—there was nothing left but books, and much thought over needlework, in solitary hours. Please do not give me undue credit; it is more mortifying than blame. I must tell you how it was I thought so much of your life. Nearly two years ago, after you made such a vast sacrifice to principle—giving up wealth, station, popularity, family, friends, love, esteem, *all* for your ideas of duty—hero-worshipper that I was, I recognized in you the elements of which heroes are made, and"——

She blushed, and suddenly stopped, conscious of the indelicacy of praising him to his face.

"Go on, dear Rosalie."

Still she remained silent and embarrassed.

"Well, Rosalie, you saw, or rather you *thought* you saw, in me the elements of heroism?"

"It was very impertinent in me to presume to say so—forgive it!"

"Nay, dear child, I beg you won't take it back! If you do not hope for me, who will?"

"Indeed, I do hope for your success very strongly—and more than that, I count upon it very confidently"——

"But finish what you were going to say; you saw in some one 'the elements of which heroes are made, and' "——

"Oh, nothing, only I dived more deeply than ever before into my lives of great men, and reflected more than ever upon the causes that made them great, if you do not think it presumption in a girl like me to talk of reflection upon such a subject. But my mind ever had an attraction to it, and you gave that attraction a new and strong interest. I thought of you, and hoped that you were on the road to an honourable and beneficent distinction. I was grieved to hear that you were coming here; I would have opposed it, had I dared. Do not stay here, Mr. Sutherland."

"I must fulfil my engagement with your uncle!"

"My uncle will release you from it."

"Yet, dear Rosalie, I cannot leave now."

"Do not think me importunate, impertinent; I wish you would go even now to-day."

Mark Sutherland looked up at her in surprise, but checked the answer that rose to his lips, when he saw her troubled face. Her work being now completed, she arose, and left the room.

CHAPTER XII.

BRIDAL PREPARATIONS.

"Oh, yet we know that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill,
To pangs of nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood:

"That nothing walks with aimless feet;
That not one life shall be destroyed,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile complete:

"That not a worm is cloven in vain!
That not a worm, with vain desire,
Is shrivelled in a fruitless fire,
Or but subserves another's gain."—*Tennyson.*

For the next several days, various notes of preparation as for some joyful coming event, were sounded through the old hall. Servants, within and without the house, pursued their avocations with unusual alacrity. Waggons, with new furniture, arrived from a neighbouring town. In the drawing-room and parlours, Mrs. Vivian directed the operations of the upholsterers, in putting down new carpets, and hanging new curtains, mirrors, &c. On the lawn, and in the garden, Rosalie's taste presided at the trimming and

dressing of vines, shrubs, and flowers; while from one to the other Colonel Ashley flew with a gay, busy interest. They were all evidently playing the prelude to some great family festival. Mark Sutherland remained unenlightened upon the subject, until, one morning, as he walked out upon the piazza, to enjoy the early freshness of the air, he was joined by the two lads, Henry and Richard, who, seizing each a hand, eagerly inquired—

"Are you going to walk out this morning, before breakfast, Mr. Sutherland?"

A nod and smile was his answer. He was depressed, despondent; he felt that he had no part in all that was going on in that house—he felt himself a stranger and an alien. Yet, too generous and benevolent to damp the spirits of the lads by his own gloom, he smiled upon them kindly, and when they asked permission to accompany him, he inquired, gaily, how it happened that, while all were so very busy, in the house and on the grounds, they alone should be idle.

"Oh, Mrs. Vivian drives us out of the way—even Rose won't let us help her, and father threatens to lock us up if we don't keep quiet. We're driven about from post to pillar; and so we came out to walk with *you*. Father and the rest of them making such a fuss! just as if nobody ever got married before St. Gerald!" said Richard, contemptuously.

Another might have rebuked the boy for speaking so disrespectfully; but Mark had little of the tutor spirit in him, after all. Rosalie was right in that.

They left the piazza, crossed the lawn, and took the narrow path leading along the course of the stream—

the boys sometimes affectionately holding his hands, and sometimes one or the other suddenly breaking away to pluck and bring him an early violet, or eglantine rose, or to throw a pebble in the stream, where some small fish had started up. At last—

"Making such a fuss!" again complained Richard; "making such a fuss, and driving us about so that we boys can't have a bit of peace of our lives! Just as if *she* were so much better than everybody else in the world, that so much trouble must be taken for *her*."

"Whom are you talking of?" inquired Mr. Sutherland, carelessly.

"Why the young lady St. Gerald is going to marry, to be sure!"

"Ah, then, Mr. Ashley is going to bring home a wife, is he?"

"Why, *of course* he is!" said Henry, warming up. "He is going to be married to a beautiful young lady, very rich, who was the belle of the city last winter, they say!"

"Oh, she is as rich and as beautiful as a princess in a fairy book; and that's what all the fuss is about," sneered Richard.

"Don't you mind Rich, Mr. Sutherland; he can't bear to have a word said about anybody but himself!"

"As if I wanted anybody to bother themselves about me—I'm not so much like *you* as *that*," retorted Richard. And thereupon arose the usual squabble between the lads, until their tutor interfered and restored order, if not good feeling.

They continued their walk for about a mile along

the mountain stream, and then returning by the back hills, got home at the breakfast hour.

Colonel Ashley, Mrs. Vivian, and Rose, were already seated at the breakfast-table, and engaged in eager conversation concerning the approaching marriage of the heir of the house, when Mr. Sutherland and the lads entered.

"Good morning, Mr. Sutherland. I hope you have had a pleasant walk—though I would not be bothered with those troublesome boys, if I were you; their company is quite enough in school hours, I should think!" said the old gentleman, banteringly, as they took their places at the board.

Mrs. Vivian and Rosalie smiled a salutation. And then the thread of the conversation was taken up again, as if it had never been broken, and as if Mark Sutherland was already familiar with the premises.

"Yes; St. Gerald writes me that the marriage will come off at an early hour of the day, and that immediately after the ceremony they will set out from Washington for this place. It will take them two days to reach here, so that we may expect the party on Thursday evening. Rosalie, my dear, bear that in mind, if you please, and be ready. Mrs. Vivian, my dear lady, I do not want *two* cups of chocolate at once—this, I think, is intended for Mr. Sutherland!" said the old gentleman, passing the cup to Mark.

Mrs. Vivian's mind was certainly absent and distracted, as her manner was disconcerted, and her beautiful countenance troubled.

After breakfast, the family party separated as

usual. Colonel Ashley went to his study, to write letters; Mrs. Vivian and Rosalie to their work-table, in the parlour; and Mark to his school-room, with the boys.

The ladies had scarcely seated themselves, before a servant entered to say that Mr. Robert Bloomfield had come with the ponies, and wished to know if Miss Rosalie would ride.

"Don't go, Rose; send an excuse. Cut this companionship firmly and kindly off, at once and forever," said Mrs. Vivian, in a low voice.

"Tell him, William, that I am very much obliged for his kindness, but I cannot ride to-day," said Rosalie, and, as the servant left the room, she added, "That was a very unkind, ungrateful message, mamma."

"Nonsense! What kindness or gratitude do you owe to Robert?" answered the lady, with an apparent harshness of sentiment that her heart did not by any means justify.

But, before Rosalie could reply again, Robert Bloomfield entered the room, flushed and in haste; and, without even seeing Mrs. Vivian, hurried up to the young girl, exclaiming—"Rose! Rose! how *is* this? Three times I have called here, as usual—as a matter of course—to ride with you, and each time I have been met by your servant, and told—I don't know what, except that I could not see you, Rose. Dear Rosalie, have I offended you in any way? Dear Rosalie, speak to me! Say! Say, are you angry with me?" he persisted, seeing that she did not answer.

"Now, what on earth should I be angry with you about, Robert? Of course, I am not angry."

"You are offended with me. You are, I feel you are—I know you are; I see it in your face, Rosalie," he persisted, gazing on her troubled countenance, and reading, but not aright, its sorrowful expression.

"Indeed, I am not displeased with you, dear Bob. How could I possibly be, when you never in your life gave me cause for any other feeling towards you than esteem and thankfulness?"

"'Esteem and thankfulness!' I told you before, Rosalie, if you persisted in talking that way you'd drive me out of my senses!"

Here Mrs. Vivian hemmed, to give notice of her presence; and Robert Bloomfield turned, and perceived her for the first time. If he had not observed the lady before, he did not care about her now. He bowed; and then, forgetting her, turned, and resumed his conversation with Rosalie, in the same impatient, impassioned tone.

Mrs. Vivian, with a cold, offended air, arose and left the room. But as soon as the door closed behind the lady, and Robert found himself alone with Rosalie, he certainly betrayed a great sense of relief, for his manner became more earnest and vehement, and he pleaded anew the hopeless suit so often and so decidedly rejected. His tongue was loosened, and words flowed, without let or hindrance, in that impetuous torrent of eloquence inspired only by passion; and Rosalie listened with emotion scarcely less than his own, for every word he uttered gave expression to the vague, deep, unspoken yearning of her own heart.

She heard him out patiently; yes, she let him begin again, and go over the whole matter a second and a third time, before she could find courage to destroy his hopes. At last she said—

"I have deeply wronged you, Robert. I did not mean it, Heaven knows; but I *have* wronged you. Robert, I am very sorry. I shall never forgive myself."

"I don't understand you, Rosalie—I—*do* tell me what you mean!"

"I mean that I have not been frank enough with you, Robert. I have not had the courage," said Rosalie, in a faltering voice, for she still deeply pitied him.

He did not look like an object of pity, just then; all his countenance suddenly brightened with joy. He seized her hand, exclaiming—"Do I comprehend? Do I hear you right? Do you mean, after all, that you like me a little better than you said you did?"

"No. Oh! Robert, what a sanguine nature yours must be, to interpret every word which is not positive, in your own way No, Robert! I mean, that I have thoughtlessly accepted all your kind services, knowing full well that I never, never can repay the smallest of them. I mean, too, that I have let you tell me, again and again, of your regard, knowing all the while that I can never, never return it in the way you wish. I have wronged you, by not telling you this with sufficent firmness before!"

"Cruel! cold! hard! heartless!"

"It is my misfortune that I cannot accept you, Robert. My reason is telling me all the time, just as any prudent old lady could tell me—that if I *could* like you, I should have an enviable lot in life; not

because you are wealthy, and all that, of course, Robert, but because I really do know you are—so good, so disinterested, so true, and because your dear mother and sisters are just like you, and I could love them as if they were my own relatives."

"In mercy, Rosalie, why do you talk to me so, if you never mean to accept me?"

"Why, indeed? Because I cannot reject this kindness, for which I am indeed most sincerely grateful, in any other but the humblest manner, and with every circumstance to assure you, that I feel how much good I reject in rejecting you, Robert. Dear Robert, there is certainly destiny, as well as duty, in these matters; and, well as I like you, I could not love you enough to marry you, if my salvation depended on it; indeed I could not. I am not destined to so easy a life, Robert. I begin to have a foreshadowing that my lot will be a very rough one, Robert; that I shall not be left to bask in the sunshine, but shall have to face and weather the storm."

"You—you fragile snow-drop! What do you mean now? *You* meet the storms of life! Has the Planters' Own Bank broken, or have all the slaves on the plantation run off in a body?"

"Neither one nor the other, Robert. And if I 'rough it' in the world, it will be my own free choice."

"I confess I do not understand you—except that you make me wretched; that is plain enough, but as to the rest, I am all in the dark."

"It is my own secret, Robert."

"One thing I do know; that is, you are too delicate for a rough life."

"Robert, there are many delicate natures that have

been cherished, and nursed, and petted to miserable weakness and death. My flower garden has taught me that lesson."

"I should like to know how a flower garden could teach you a lesson like *that!*"

"Oh! should you? I can tell you, then. Last year, when I came here, I found a new flower growing in the garden. I don't know botany, and I don't know what the flower was, or how it came there; but I suppose the wind brought the seed. My flower was so feeble and withered, that it had lost all beauty and comeliness, and every charm, except a delightful odour. I weeded and worked around it, and watered it regularly, and nursed and cherished it, but it faded faster and faster, yielding a dying fragrance. I said it was too exposed and cold, and I took it up and transplanted it to the conservatory. There it wilted and fell, and I gave it up for lost. But now mark the sequel. A few days after, I took a ride up to the mountain top, and left my horse, for a ramble on foot. A fresh, delicate, delicious odour greeted me. I looked about, and lo! there, in a cleft of the rock on the mountain top, where it would be exposed to all the snow, and wind, and hail of winter, and burning rays of summer, was my strange hot-house plant! There it grew and flourished, swaying to and fro in the wind, and filling all the air with the freshness of its fragrance! Now what do you think I did, Robert? You will laugh at me, of course, for everybody laughed. The very next day I took my poor flower, that was dying in the conservatory—and that I pitied as if it had been a sick, caged bird—and I carried it up the mountain, and planted it in the evening.

Thunder gusts and showers the next day prevented my ride; but the third day I visited my protege. It was living! It had plucked up a spirit and intended to live. I am like that plant, Robert! And now, to come back to yourself. We must part, Robert, as friends—kindly—but not to meet again, except as mere acquaintances, until you have outgrown the present weakness of your heart."

She extended her hand—he pressed it to his lips, seized his cap, and hastily left the house.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE MEETING.

"The staring madness, when she wakes, to find
That which she has loved—must love—is not that
She meant to love—
There is a desolation in her eye
He cannot bear to look on—for it seems
As though it eats the light out of his own."—*Festus.*

THE day at length came upon which St. Gerald Ashley and his young bride, with their attendants, were expected to arrive at Ashley Hall. Early in the afternoon, the carriage had been sent to the village to meet them; and in the evening all the members of the family were assembled in the drawing-room, to await them. Many of the country gentry, who had been invited to meet the bridal party, had joined the circle in the course of the evening, and the rooms were now quite full. Among the guests present were

the Right Honourable W—— R——, then Governor of the State; Judge M——, of the Supreme Court; and a few others, high in state or national authority, whose distinguished names are now historical. But there was no one present so proud or happy as old Colonel Ashley, who walked about gently rubbing his hands, in the simple gleefulness of his country heart and habits.

The carriage was behind time; for the reason, it was rumoured, that the bride and her attendants chose to rest an hour or two at the village. At length, however, the welcome wheels were heard to roll up to the door, and the travellers to alight and enter the hall. They retired to change their dresses before entering the drawing-room. In the meantime, among the country neighbours in the saloon, all was half-subdued excitement and expectancy. Among the company was Mark Sutherland, of course. He was not one to shade with his dark brow the brightness of other people's gaiety. In the social temper of youth, he had sought to enter into the spirit of the time, and had laughed and jested with the young people, or "talked politics" with the elders, as the case demanded. He had heard the slight, subdued bustle in the hall, incident upon the arrival of the bridal party; and the instant absorption of the whole heart of the assembled company, in the interest of the moment, had left him free. He had stood a few moments quite alone and unobserved, when a slight tremulousness of the air near him, a slight disturbance of his own serenity, caused him to look up.

Rosalie Vivian was standing near him, with a deprecating, imploring look and gesture. Her face was

white as the white crape dress she wore, and her wreath of snow drops quivered with the trembling of her frame.

Startled by her appearance, he asked hurriedly—"Dear Rosalie, has anything happened? What is the matter?"

"I ought to have told you before! *Some* of us ought to have told you! *I* ought to have done so!" she answered, somewhat vaguely and wildly.

"Told me *what*, dear Rosalie? What is it?"

"Give me the support of your arm into the next room—there is no one there."

"My child, you are not well!" said Mark, looking at her now with painful anxiety, as he drew her hand through his arm.

"I am not *good*, you ought to say. I have not been good! I have been a coward! I have not been your friend, Mark! I have been a traitor."

"A traitor! Rosalie, you rave!"

"I ought to have told you any time this month past; but I could not *bear* to do it. And now it is scarcely any use at all; it is a mockery to tell you. But yet, indeed, I could not bear to see you standing there, so gay and unsuspicious. I could not bear to think how you would lose your self-command in *her* presence. No, I could not endure the thought, Mark!" she said, more and more incoherently.

"Rosalie, you are very nervous; you have over-excited yourself about this wedding. Come, let me get you something," said Mark, drawing her gently through the crowd.

As they passed, the buzz of conversation increased very much, and "They are coming;" "The bride is

coming;" "There she is;" "Hush," &c., were the sounds that heralded the entrance of the bridal party, just as Mark Sutherland led Rosalie Vivian into the next room. He took her to a sofa, seated her, handed her a glass of water; but she waved it aside, saying, "I do not need it—I do not need it! It is *you* who need strength and calmness now. O, Mark! I wish you had left the house when I advised you to leave it!" she exclaimed, her agitation becoming momentarily greater. At last, forcing herself to speak again, she asked: "Mr. Sutherland! Mark! Do you know the name of the lady whom St. Gerald Ashley has married?"

"Certainly," said Mark Sutherland, raising his eyebrows in an interrogative manner.

"You do!" exclaimed Rosalie, greatly surprised—excited.

"Certainly I do! How could I possibly remain in ignorance of it?"

"You do! You know it! And yet you are so calm! Nay, indeed, I am afrald you are mistaken; whom do you suppose it to be?"

"One once betrothed to myself—my cousin India!"

"You know it! And you are not unhappy about it! Oh, blessed Lord! I am so thankful—so glad!" And Rosalie dropped her face upon her hands, and wept softly and quietly.

"Dear Rosalie, has all this disturbance of yours been caused by your sympathy with unworthy me?"

"I remembered how you suffered at Cashmere—I feared—I dreaded if you met her suddenly here—the bride of another—that"——

"Well, dear Rose! That"——

"Oh, I fear you think me very impertinent. If you do, you may tell me so; indeed, I shall not take it amiss."

"Tell me your thought, Rosalie. Was it that all those old wounds would be re-opened? That all those sufferings would be renewed?"

"Yes!"

"Yet you see that they are not."

"No, thank Heaven, Mark! But I cannot understand it."

"Well, then, understand it now. The advent of my promised bride, as the wedded wife of another, does not disturb a pulse of mine, because, in *my* heart—in any honourable heart—love could not long survive esteem, more than it could survive hope or duty, and because"—— Here his whole manner grew most earnest, most intense, and passing his arm over her shoulder, he drew her face towards his own, and kissing away the tear drops from her eyes, said, "Because I love this single tear of true feeling better than the whole heart of yonder selfish beauty!"

And now, if Mark fancied tears, he might have a plenty of them; for now they fell warm and fast.

"What is the matter, Rosalie? Why do you weep now?" asked Mark.

But she did not answer. He repeated the question perseveringly.

At last, sobbing softly, and smiling, and sighing, and blushing, and averting her face, she said, archly, "Juliet wept at what she was 'glad of.'"

"Are *you* glad, Rosalie? Tell me, dear Rose. Are *you* glad that I love you more than all the world—

that I have chosen you the guiding star of my life?"

She did not, could not answer.

He repeated this question, also searchingly, perseveringly, only to hear her answer; and he bent his ear, and averted his eyes, and quelled the beating of his heart, to win her reply.

At last it came, with her face hidden on his shoulder, and in a tone scarcely above her breath—"I always hoped you would like me at last; I did not think you would so soon, though."

"But are you glad—are you *glad?*" persisted the unreasonable man.

"Yes, *glad*," whispered Rosalie; and in proof of her truth the tears rolled quietly down her face.

"And so am I! Glad, happy, hopeful, confident, Rosalie! There will be no more faltering, and fainting, and failing now! You have infused new life into me. That any gossamer girl should have the power to do this! Yet such is the case, Rosalie."

"Am I such a gossamer?"

"You are very fragile, Rosalie."

"'Out of the heart are the issues of life.'"

They were interrupted, of course; people always are when they are very blessed. It does not suit "the rest of mankind" to leave them so. This time it was old Colonel Ashley, who really was happy enough in himself to have left Mark and Rosalie alone in their content, if he had known it. He came in with a brisk step, with his slight figure seeming slighter, his grey hair lighter, and his thin, rosy face fiercer than ever, with the effervescence of his joy. He advanced, speaking—

"Ah, Mr. Sutherland, you are here! I have been looking for you. What! will you be the last to pay your respects to the bride, and she a relative—though a very distant one, I suppose, of your own? Come, let me present you."

"Does India—does Mrs. Ashley expect me?" inquired Mr. Sutherland.

"I imagine not!" replied the old gentleman, raising his eyebrows; "but that does not matter, you know. Come!"

Pressing the hand of Rosalie, before relinquishing it, Mark Sutherland arose to accompany Colonel Ashley to the front drawing-room, and to the presence of the bride.

They could not at once approach her, on account of the number of persons around her; yet the room was not so thronged with company as to prevent their having a full view of the bride and her attendants.

There stood India receiving the homage of her circle—her superb form arrayed in the rich and gorgeous costume that was so well adapted to her majestic and luxurious style of beauty. Her cheeks were mantled with a rich, high colour, yet this seemed not the carnation bloom of youth and health, but the fire of a feverish excitement. Her eyes were dark and brilliant, yet not with the light of innocent love and joy, but with the blaze of a burning and consuming heart.

"Come," whispered the old gentleman; "it is no use to stand here waiting our opportunity; for we might stand all night, and those fools wouldn't give way. Poor wretches!—just like boys peeping at a gentleman's conservatory, where they know they dare not

touch even a rose-bud. Come, we must elbow through that circle of dandies; gently, you know—gently."

And suiting the action to the words, Colonel Ashley adroitly insinuated himself through the outer crowd and through the nearer circle, and into the very presence of the bride.

She was not looking towards the new-comers. She was listening to a gentleman, who, having apparently exhausted all other subjects of adulation, was now expatiating upon the rare and exquisite beauty of the bouquet she held in her hand.

Colonel Ashley and Mr. Sutherland were before her.

"Mrs. Ashley"——

She looked round.

"Will you permit me to present to you my young friend, Mr. Sutherland—a distant relative of your own, may I hope?"

Mark Sutherland looked up, caught her eye, and bowed deeply. But before he had had time to do so, before even the deliberate ceremonious presentation speech of the old gentleman was half over—at the very instant she had turned around, and her eye had fallen upon Mark Sutherland—a change, an appalling change, had come over her lovely face and form, like that which might be supposed to sweep over the face of some beautiful and fertile oasis at the sudden blast of the simoom, that buries all its luxurious beauty in the burning and arid sands of the desert.

As by the sudden smite of death, all colour was dashed out from her cheek, and all light from her eye. For a moment she stood and gazed, transfixed, unable to withdraw her stony eyes from his; then,

with a sudden cry, as if some tightly-strained heart-string had snapped—the tension of her form relaxed, and she fell to the floor!

In an instant all was confusion. Raised in the arms of her father, Clement Sutherland—who, until that moment, had remained obscure in the back-ground—the swooning bride was borne into the adjoining room, and laid upon the sofa, while restoratives were anxiously sought for, to be administered.

In the meantime, in the saloon she had left, only two persons—Mark Sutherland and Mrs. Vivian—understood the cause of her fainting. Various innocent conjectures prevailed, far from the truth. "It was the heat of the room," thought one; "Over-excitement," opined another; "Standing so long," fancied a third; "The fatigue of her journey," imagined a fourth. "Really, it was too inconsiderate in Colonel Ashley to oblige his daughter to receive company upon the very evening of her arrival," complained Mrs. Chief Justice M——, a large, heavy person, fanning herself slowly. "I noticed her face was very pale," said a sympathetic lady, drawing upon her imagination for her facts. "Indeed! but I thought it was very flushed," interrupted a matter-of-fact individual.

All these various conjectures were expressed in low, almost inaudible tones; while, undisturbed and smiling, Mrs. Vivian passed among the company, and, as it were, moved upon the troubled waters of their half-suppressed excitement, and, with her mere smile of self-possession, restoring calmness and order.

Presently the door of the inner room opened, and the bride reappeared, leaning lightly upon the arm of

her father, and attended by her husband and bridesmaids. She entered, and passed up the saloon to her former position. Several country gentlemen zealously drew forward a cushioned chair, and several sympathetic old-fashioned ladies approached, with inquiries and expressions of condolence.

Pale and weary, but smiling and self-possessed, Mrs. Ashley gracefully accepted the services of the former, and replied to the interested questions and comments of the latter.

"It was very ill-judged on the part of the Colonel, my dear, to subject you to the fatigue of a reception, just off your journey—very indeed," said Mrs. Chief Justice M——.

"I do really think we ought to exercise the good taste of retiring," whispered another.

Whether India heard this remark or not, she answered—

"I am not fatigued. We made but a very short stage to day, and rested several hours at the next village. No; it was the warmth and closeness of the room. The windows are open now, and the effect has gone with the cause," she added, smiling brightly, while at the same moment the consciousness of the first falsehood she had ever uttered in her life brought a warm though transient blush to her cheek, that resembled the returning glow of strength, and reassured all doubt.

After a little, the musicians began to touch their instruments, and soon struck up a lively quadrille air. The younger portion of the company gave signs of restlessness. Gentlemen hesitated, and then chose their partners for the set, and remained awaiting the mo-

tions of Mrs. Ashley. As hostess, it was her right to select any gentleman present to honour with her hand for the quadrille; and as bride, it was her privilege to lead off the dance.

When India became aware that all were waiting for her, she threw her eyes over the assembly; and the aspiring heart of many a youth beat faster when their beams lingered for an instant on him. But he for whom she looked was nowhere to be seen. At last, a smile of scorn and *self-scorn* writhed swiftly athwart her lips, and her eyes suddenly blazed as their light kindled upon the form of one who came in at the farthest door. Quick as lightning flashed and fled the spasm of that face, leaving it serene and smiling, as she arose and met the new-comer, and said sweetly—

"My cousin Mark, will you honour me?"

And before the astonished man could bow, she had placed her hand in his, and he found himself by her side, at the head of a set that instantly formed around them.

India spoke and smiled with her usual charming ease, and danced with her usual grace and dignity.

And after the dance was finished, and her partner had led her to her seat, she detained him near her, toying with her fan or bouquet, talking of a thousand nothings. She presented him to her husband; and Mark Sutherland, of course, politely expressed himself pleased to form the personal acquaintance of one with whose public life and services he had been so long familiar, &c.

Throughout the long evening, India maintained a regnant self-control. And Mark Sutherland wondered at the seeming inconsistency of her conduct. He did

not know, or he did not reflect, that in the first instance of surprise, her *nerves* had—so to speak—got the start of her *will*, and so betrayed her; but that after once the will had regained the ascendancy over the nerves, it was able to control them.

Not again that evening did Mark Sutherland find an opportunity to speak with Rosalie. India detained him at her side, smiling, chatting, and in her daring audacity carrying back their recollections into scenes and times and places that suggested the parallel of taking lighted candles among open casks of camphine or gunpowder. Her indifference was too well attested to be genuine. But Mark Sutherland's perfect calmness—real and thorough, as hers was assumed and superficial—assisted her.

The drama of the evening was at last over. The company had departed, the lights were out, and India found herself, for a few moments, alone in her chamber. She had smiled, and glanced, and chatted, and charmed all eyes and ears to the last. She had gained the privacy of her chamber—she had angrily, then fiercely, rejected the services of her attendant, and turned her from the room. And now, for the moment, she was alone and free—the acting all was over—the mask might be laid aside—the miserable victim of pride might seem the wretch she really was.

And oh! the fearful change that came over that beautiful but agonized face when the mask of smiles fell! She threw herself, all robed, and gemmed, and wreathed, as she was, prostrate upon the bed—her form convulsed, her bosom heaving with the suffocating anguish, which, from its very excess could not be vented.

"False! false! false!" she wailed. "False to Mark! false to my husband! falser than all, to myself! Lost! lost! lost! Lost, body, soul, and spirit! Would that I could die!"

A light, gay footstep on the stairs, a low, love-tuned voice near the door, and it opened, and St. Gerald Ashley entered, with a smile of confiding affection on his noble face.

How will that erring woman meet his manly, trusting love?

CHAPTER XIV.

ROSALIE.

"And I am blessed, to my mind."—*E. B. Browning.*

ROSALIE'S content was undisturbed and perfect. She had not witnessed India's fainting. She knew of it, but ascribed it, as others did, to fatigue, heat, and over-excitement. She never once associated the swoon of the bride with the meeting with her former lover. It is true she had dreaded this meeting, for the sake of Mark, who, she feared, still cherished an affection for India; but she had no such fears for her. She could not have imagined—the simple integrity of her heart shielded her from imagining—that India could have given her hand to one man, while cherishing a thenceforth guilty preference for another. Of course, she had heard and read of ladies who desecrated marriage by making a legal sale of themselves

for money, rank, or convenience; but then such were ladies of society, ladies of the great world—not high-hearted women, not women of noble *sentiments*, like her friend India, who, if she were fickle, was at least truthful, even in her fickleness. No; the thought of India, while the wife of another, still loving Mark, and fainting at his sudden appearance, never entered the girl's mind. She heard and entirely believed India's own explanation of her swoon—"the closeness of the room"—and so, undisturbed by the suspicion of that suffering near her, which, had she known it, would have greatly troubled her peace, Rosalie yielded up her soul to serene joy. That night in her prayers she returned earnest thanks for the happiness accorded her. She sought her pillow in the fulness of content. Mark loved her! beyond this, she did not care to ask or hope any earthly good. Mark loved her! this was happiness enough for one long season. Mark loved her! the thought enveloped her soul in a benign sense of perfect protection, safety, and comfort. Mark loved her! the thought was perfect peace. Wrapped in it, she sweetly fell asleep.

She awoke in the morning, with a vague impression of a great happiness sleeping in her heart. Suddenly, with a shock of electric joy, she remembered what it was—Mark loved her! Again, in her morning worship, she offered up fervent thanksgiving for this priceless boon of love; and after she had made her simple morning toilet, she left her room, and went down stairs. Her self-assumed domestic duties claimed attention; but still the light of her inward joy brightened all her countenance.

Colonel Ashley, always an early riser, was in the

hall when she descended. He met her, smiling. She was smiling, too.

"Well, my bonny girl!" he said, "spite of late hours, our mountain breezes are beginning to make the roses bloom on your cheeks. You look very pretty this morning!"

"Well," said Rosalie, "how long am I to keep the keys, or when am I to deliver them up to *Madame l'épouse?*"

"Ah! I don't know. How should I? You must settle that between you. In a few days, I suppose. Ask your pretty little mamma; she is likely to know such points of domestic etiquette. Madam does not look very much like the material of which Virginia housewives are composed, I must say. I fear, little girl, that you will still have to carry the keys."

"Now, you know, uncle, if I am to have all the duties of housekeeper, without the dignities of mistress, I intend to demand a salary for my services. Do you hear?"

"And you shall have it, my dear—ten kisses a day. Will that suit you?"

Rosalie laughed and left him.

It was yet early in the morning, and she went to "see after" breakfast. Her first visit was to her diary, to have the new milk strained, and the old milk skimmed, and the cream and butter iced and brought out for breakfast. Then she sent two little negro girls into the garden, to gather raspberries—a necessary luxury in its season on a country breakfast table. Then she went into the cellar, to select the fresh fish and game and oysters that had been kept in ice. Then went to the pantry, to give out coffee, tea, cho-

colate, sugar, &c. Then to the plate and china closet, to "parade" the best Sevres breakfast service and the family plate, in honour of the occasion. Her next visit was to the breakfast room, to see that the table was well arranged. "I wonder, after all, if India *will* like to spend two hours of the early morning in this manner, instead of lounging them away over her own elegant toilet," said Rosalie to herself, as she passed into the room. Finding all in order here, the busy little housewife passed next into that pleasant room near the kitchen and the pantry, and fronting upon the garden, and devoted to the picking of vegetables and fruit, and such little half-horticultural, half-culinary pursuits. Here she found her two little black handmaids, with their baskets of raspberries, waiting for her. She praised their diligence and took the raspberries, and was engaged in putting them in cut-glass dishes, and powdering them with sugar, when she felt a light hand laid upon her shoulder, and, glancing around, she saw Mark Sutherland standing behind her, smiling upon her. A sudden bright blush suffused her beautiful countenance; but she exclaimed, saucily—

"Not even the grace of Paul Pry, to say, 'I hope I don't intrude.'"

"You know you gave me the freedom of this room long ago, little housekeeper."

"A privilege which men like you seem inclined to abuse," answered Rosalie, glancing at her gingham gown, holland apron, and turned-up sleeves.

"Beautiful in that also, Rosalie. What a charming little peasant you make!"

"I think so too," said Rose, ingenuously; and then,

blushing and laughing, she suddenly corrected herself, saying, "*Oh!* I did not mean *that;* I meant I like this dress and this occupation, and think they suit me perhaps as well as any other."

"Shall I help you with this also, Rosalie?" said Mark, taking up a sugar-duster.

"Oh, no, thank you! I have nearly done. If you want employment, you may go into the garden and select a bouquet of the sweetest half-blown white rose buds and heliotrope that you can find, as a morning offering to our bride."

"And for you, a posy of heartsease," he answered meaningly, pressing her fingers as he went.

Rosalie finished her fruit, ornamenting the edges of the dishes with fresh green leaves, and sent them to the table. Then she went and changed her dress for breakfast; and when Mark returned from the garden, he found her standing in the hall waiting for him.

She was looking very lovely, in her fresh white muslin morning dress, without any ornament, but her own soft brown ringlets, and the bright blush and smile lighted by happiness.

"Here they are, sweetheart!" he said, gaily and fondly showing the flowers.

"An elegant bouquet for the bride!" she exclaimed admiringly.

"And a sweet little posy for you," he said, placing the heartsease on her bosom.

"*Il est a propos, n'est ce pas?*"

"It is fit."

"*Oui! Comme il faut, Monsieur?*"

"It is faultless."

"Do you mean to say you won't talk French with me, Mark?"

"I mean only to show you, as long as you speak it to me, that there is not a word or phrase in that fashionable and hackneyed language, that has not a shorter, stronger, and more expressive synonym in our own mother tongue. There is no language for true thought and strong feeling like our earnest English. But, my Rose! even English has no word to tell how much I love you—how dear you are to me! All last evening, occupied, monopolized as I was, sometimes for a moment I would forget you, and then your image would return to me with—how shall I say it?—how express it?—with such a thrill of life and joy as I never felt before; an emotion purer, higher, more blissful than I ever knew before. But, Rose! my rose! will this dream fade also? Must I wake, to find that you cannot go with me through the rough paths of life, up which my footsteps have to toil?"

"No, Mark! No—unless you will it so. Believe in me, for I am true. 'Whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God; and the Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part me and thee,'" she said earnestly.

There was earnest honour as well as deep affection in the broken words wherewith he blessed her, as he led her back into the parlour where all the family were now assembled.

CHAPTER XV.

DISCORDANCES.

"But here upon this earth below,
There's not a spot where thou and I
Together for an hour could breathe."—*Byron.*

It was impossible that the discordant elements of social life assembled at Ashley Hall could harmonize for an instant. Of the family party gathered around the breakfast table, the pale, beautiful India assumed a mask of smiles—Mr. Ashley wore a look of anxious perplexity he did not care to hide—Mark Sutherland appeared self-possessed, but was too conscious to feel really at ease. Colonel Ashley was secretly annoyed, to find the re-union around the breakfast table not quite so cheerful as might have been expected. Mrs. Vivian was vexed at the general tacit antagonism, and resolved, if this should last, to bring her visit to a close as soon as possible. Nevertheless, she kept up an irregular fire of wit and repartee, to prevent the party falling into dead silence. Rosalie alone was truly at ease. She was totally ignorant of any cause of disunion in the circle, and too much absorbed in her own infinite content, to notice signs of disturbance among those around her.

When breakfast was over, the little lady drew Rosalie off into the piazza, and away up to the honeysuckle-shaded end, where no one was likely to come but the honey bees.

"And now, Rose," she asked, "what is it? Your

eyes have poured streams of light all breakfast time, like sun glances; they have projected rays wherever they have fallen. Now what is it all about?"

"One should be merry in wedding times!"

"Merry in wedding times! Look here, Rosalie! Some marriages are made in heaven, some on earth, and some—*in the other place.* But it was not merriment, but profound, still joy, that lighted your eyes, Rose! Now, what was it all about?"

"Mark loves me, mamma!" whispered the girl, hiding her face upon her step-mother's shoulder.

"Now, that's the most absurd thing I ever heard in all my life!" exclaimed the little lady, shoving her off, and walking rapidly away with a highly-flushed cheek.

Rosalie knew her too well, and trusted her too thoroughly, to feel any anxiety. She walked behind her, put her arms around her waist, and, bending forward, looked up smilingly into her eyes.

"You needn't think to get the better of me that way, Rose! It is ridiculous, I say! What do you mean to do with this love?"

Rose folded both hands over her bosom with a look of unspeakable content. Both look and gesture were involuntary.

"Aye, hoard it away, treasure it deep in your heart, I suppose you mean. Silly girl! Well, what is to be the end of it all? What practical object do you propose to yourself? When ever do you expect to be *married?*"

"Whenever Mark asks me, mamma!"

"It is just madness!" exclaimed the lady, impatiently; "he has not a dollar!"

"Yes, he has! All that I have, mamma!"

"All that you have! Do you imagine for an instant that your guardian will give up one cent of your property during your minority? No; he will even stop your allowance if you become the wife of Mark Sutherland!"

"Why should he do that? It would be very unjust!" said Rosalie, raising her eyebrows with surprise. "It would be unnatural! monstrous! My guardian, Mark's own uncle! Oh! surely, having discarded him, he will not pursue him with persecutions."

"*Will he not?*"

"No, I will never believe it!"

"He will fill up the measure of his animosity—believe that! Clement Sutherland did not appear at the breakfast table this morning. Can you not surmise the cause? He has many bad reasons for hating his nephew. He hates him for his political opinions, for his principles, and, more than all, for having had the power to give up the beautiful India. Clement Sutherland worships his beautiful daughter; and he hates Mark for not having laid upon her shrine the most precious jewel of his soul—his integrity. And now, with the opposition of your guardian, who is invested with such power over your fortune, what have you to expect in giving yourself to Mark Sutherland?"

"I do not know; I shall leave it all to Mark. It is no conditional promise I have given him—no half-faith I have pledged him. I have given him the full and complete control of my destiny. I could not help it. All that was within me—heart, and soul, and spirit—sprang to him when he called me. Mam-

ma, it is a word often abused, but at this moment my soul throws it irresistibly upon my lips—I *adore* Mark! And now, amidst opposition, persecution, desertion, he must know that there is one who will follow whereever he leads—one heart that will cleave to him, in joy and in sorrow, in life and in death."

At that very instant the boy brought the mail-bag, intruded upon them, and handed Mrs. Vivian a letter. As soon as her glance fell upon the superscription, her face flushed to the forehead, and, for the moment forgetful of Rosalie, she hastened to read it.

While this confidential conversation was going on between the young step-mother and her daughter, another scene, portentous with fate, transpired in the study of Colonel Ashley. As that gentleman was leaving the breakfast-room, a message was brought him from Mr. Clement Sutherland, desiring the favour of a few moments' private conversation with him. Colonel Ashley returned word that he would be pleased to see Mr. Sutherland in his study. Thither he immediately proceeded, and thither soon followed his guest.

Clement Sutherland entered, with a forbidding and foreboding scowl upon his brow.

Colonel Ashley instantly arose, set a chair, and invited him to be seated.

Clement Sutherland, without unbending the sternness of his features, bowed, and sat down.

"I trust you are in good health this morning, Mr. Sutherland," said the Colonel, urbanely.

"I am well, sir," replied his guest, coldly.

"I was sorry to miss you at the breakfast table this morning. I trust my little girl made you comfortable in your own apartment?"

"Thank you, sir."

Colonel Ashley was silenced and repelled for a little while by this churlishness on the part of his interlocutor; but, speedily recollecting that it was his guest who had sought this interview, he inquired with some reserve of manner—

"Can I be so happy as to serve you in any way this morning, Mr Sutherland?"

"Who recommended that young man whom you have engaged as a tutor?" asked Clement Sutherland, curtly.

Now, Colonel Ashley might well have been provoked by the abruptness of this question to make some unpleasant answer, but Colonel Ashley was a gentleman and a host. He replied with the utmost courtesy, yet in a manner that administered the keenest and most delicate rebuke. Looking at his guest, he said, slowly and with meaning, "His *name* recommended him, Mr. Sutherland."

"That is just what I feared. That is the one thing, unhappily, of which we cannot deprive him, and makes us, in some degree, responsible for him. Pray, sir, did you know anything of this young man's past history?"

"Nothing."

"You fancied him a relative of ours?"

"Certainly."

"Now, then, will you be so kind as to give me your attention for a few minutes?"

Colonel Ashley settled himself in an attitude of fixed interest, and Clement Sutherland commenced a narration of some considerable length, which, at its close, left Mark Sutherland with the character of a graceless

son, a faithless lover, an unprincipled man, and a mad reformer.

"Sir," said he, in conclusion, "you should not give him house-room for an hour! He will pervert your children, steal the heart of your niece, sow fatal dissension between your son and his wife, and incite your servants to revolt!"

Colonel Ashley went through all the degrees of incredulity, doubt, perplexity, and alarm, exclaiming, "I should never have believed it of him! He does not look at all like an incendiary!"

"Sir, an incendiary does not parade his combustible matter before your eyes, and *look* like he was going to fire your house!"

"He does not seem to me to be at all dangerous."

"Sir, dangerous people never *seem* dangerous."

"I rather liked the young gentleman, I confess," said Colonel Ashley, slowly and hesitatingly.

"Sir, would you like your children to imbibe revolutionary principles? Would you like your servants incited to revolt? Would you like an estrangement and separation brought about between your son and daughter-in-law? Would you like your niece to elope with a fanatic?"

"Mr. Sutherland, I must say that you shock me beyond endurance. You ruthlessly grasp subjects that a man of honour and delicacy scarcely likes to touch. You have dealt severely with the young nan, also, in your speech. He may be an enthusiast—enthusiasm is a fault appertaining to youth and genius—and, moreover, persecution is not at all to my taste; it is always the growth of cowardice. I am as far from the spirit of persecution as I am from the spirit

of fear. I do not *fear* that my children will be perverted, my negroes maddened, my niece infatuated, or my son and his wife divorced, by the presence of this high-souled but mistaken young gentleman in my family. I told you that I liked Mr. Mark Sutherland, and I cannot hate him to order. Nevertheless, as it is not expedient that one formerly betrothed of Mrs. Ashley should be here to annoy her by his presence, I will see the young gentleman, and arrange the speedy termination of our engagement."

Mr. Clement Sutherland expressed himself satisfied, arose and left the room.

Colonel Ashley remained with his head upon his chest, in an attitude of serious thought, for a few minutes; then, pulling the bell-rope, he summoned a servant.

"Go," he said to the man that entered, "and request Mr. Mark Sutherland to favour me with his company here for a few moments."

The messenger went out, and in search of the tutor.

Meanwhile, Mark Sutherland was in his own room, engaged in reading a letter that had arrived by the morning's mail. It was from his old college friend, Lauderdale. It was a very long letter, being the first that he had written to Mark Sutherland for more than two years. He began by reproaching Mark for dropping the correspondence, and leaving him in ignorance of his whereabouts. He next informed his friend that he owed his knowledge of his present residence to a happy accident—namely, to information given him by a fair lady with whom he had been so fortunate as to maintain an epistolary correspondence; that he expected soon to arrive at Ashley Hall, on a visit to

this fair friend, from whom he had received an invitation. (Here a jealous pang shot through the heart of the reader.) "A fair friend"—might that be Rosalie? Had *she* kept up a constant correspondence with Lauderdale? And had she even invited him to the house? He could not endure the suspicion for a moment. No, not even if it were only a cool, friendly correspondence. He could not endure that Rose should be on friendly terms with any man except himself. He read on. The letter proceeded to tell him all that had befallen the writer since he had last written; how he had settled in a Western country town; how, after some difficulty, he had been admitted to the bar, and how he had already got into a tolerably lucrative practice. Finally came the most startling news of all—viz., that two months previous, he—L. Lauderdale, Esq.—had come into the possession of an estate of sixty thousand dollars, by the demise of his godfather, a widower without children or near relatives, and who, dying, bequeathed to him the whole of his considerable property. "I do not fully realize this event, dear Mark," he wrote; "I cannot realize my personal interest in it. All I *do* feel—but that is much, that is everything—is that now I may go to Ashley Hall, and lay myself and my fortune at the feet of my fair friend, the beautiful widow, Mrs. Vivian."

Mark took a long, deep breath.

"What do you want, sir?" he said, looking up, and for the first time seeing Colonel Ashley's servant standing in the room.

The man delivered his message, and Mark promised

to attend Colonel Ashley soon, and dismissed the messenger.

He resumed his letter. There was little more to be read, but that little was full of fate.

"It matters not to me, now, dear Mark, what quarter of the country I live in. That shall be decided by the will of my fair queen, Valeria. One thing is certain—this 'law shop' and this village must be given up. My evacuation of the premises will leave a fair opening for any enterprising young gentleman who may choose to fill it. What say you? If you are still 'seriously inclined' to the ingenious profession of the law, let me know. If you are disposed to step into my shoes, you will find them not much worn, with not even the gloss off, only the creak and harshness taken out of them a little. Think this over, so as to be able to give an answer, by the time I see you. You may expect me soon."

Full of thought, Mark Sutherland folded up his letter, and went to the study of Colonel Ashley.

The old gentleman received him with a degree of kindness almost paternal. He arose and took his hand, and requested him to be seated. Then, after some delicate hesitation, he said—

"I was not, until this morning, made aware of the very interesting relations which you once sustained towards a young lady—your cousin—now the wife of my son. You were once engaged to be married to Miss Sutherland, I hear?"

"Yes, sir," replied the young man, seating himself, in a calm, unembarrassed manner; while the old gentleman scrutinized the expression of his countenance, without finding anything there to displease him.

"Will you object to informing me of the cause of the disruption of that engagement?"

"Certainly not, sir: we differed upon the subject of slavery. She took sides with her friends, and—we parted; that is all."

"You mean, my honoured young friend, that when called to do so, you made a stupendous, an unprecedented sacrifice of fortune, family affection, and love, for the sake of principle—mistaken principle, perhaps, yet still principle. Was it not so?"

Mark Sutherland bowed.

"My dear young friend, *we differ in opinion;* but I highly respect you. I earnestly pray that you may be set right," said the old gentleman, warmly, as he held out his hand to Mark, who grasped it, pressed it, and let it fall.

"Mr. Sutherland, in every exigency of your life, I pray you to consider me as your friend, ready always to serve you with counsel or assistance of any kind. I have fancied that since the unexpected rencounter of last evening, you might have something to propose; or, rather, that you might *wish* to propose, yet be withheld by some exquisite sense of honour and delicacy. I entreat you now to waive all considerations save those of truth, and speak freely to me."

"I had something to say to you, Colonel Ashley, and, under the circumstances, the approach of the subject was, as you rightly inferred, extremely difficult to me. I thank you for having opened the way," said the young man, *totally misapprehending him;* then, after a moment's hesitation, he went on to say—"You have doubtless surmised the nature of the communication I had to make to you. It is, that I love your

niece, Miss Vivian; I have told her as much within a few hours past, and have her permission to entreat your sanction of our engagement."

Colonel Ashley sprang from his chair, shoving it behind him, and stood gazing with astonishment upon the young man—with simple astonishment, unmixed with regret or resentment. At last—

"How long has this gone on, sir, without my knowledge?"

"I fancied it was *not* without your knowledge, sir. Our association has been very open. I fancied, from your own words, that you expected the communication I have just made," said Mark, with a surprise almost equal to his own.

"No, sir, no! my words referred to a totally different matter, which I shall explain presently," replied the old gentleman, resuming his seat, with a somewhat changed manner. "So you have addressed Miss Vivian?"

Mark bowed.

"And won her consent to be yours?"

Another bow of assent.

"Humph! well—so I have been truly warned, after all! Pray, Mr. Sutherland, have you ever tried to instil into the minds of my sons, your pupils, any of your own opinions in respect to slavery?"

"I have never named the subject to them, sir. I have endeavoured to cultivate in them principles of truth, justice, and mercy, and left the application of those principles to that subject to time and circumstances."

"Humph! Have you ever convened my coloured people, and preached insurrection to them?"

"Sir!" exclaimed Mark, with the indignant blood purpling his forehead.

"Nay, nay! don't look so. God knows, if you had done so, I should have sought no vengeance, young man."

"Colonel Ashley, I am neither mad nor unprincipled, however I may have been misrepresented to you."

"I believe it, Mark! I quite believe it. I will not examine you upon the *fourth charge!* Heaven knows what demonstrations of indignation would meet my question, should I ask you if, poet-wise, you had endeavoured to awaken in Mrs. Ashley's memory any sentimental reminiscences of the past!"

Mark smiled.

"Yet nevertheless, my dear young friend, it was upon *that subject* that I wished to speak to you. Mr. and Mrs. Ashley will make this house their permanent home. My son's wife will be the mistress of the establishment, of course. Will it be pleasant for you to meet them in daily, hourly intercourse? I have seen it written, that 'friendship sometimes turns to love, but love to friendship never.' A brimstone sentiment, I admit. Still, I can imagine cases and characters to which it is applicable. For instance, I do not think it possible for you and your cousin ever to be friends."

Mark was silent.

"You do not speak. Do you perchance imagine that you two could live comfortably under the same roof?"

"Colonel Ashley, I know we could not."

"That will do; we understand each other. And I

leave all the rest to yourself. I will speak with you again to-morrow. In the meantime, do me the favour to let Miss Vivian know that I wish to see her."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE CONFESSION.

"She'll go with him, in all his weal and woe;
She'll be with him in sunshine and in storm;
In his afflictions, should they fall on him;
In his temptations, when bad men beset him;
In all the perils which may press around him;
And, should they crush him, in the hour of death."

Taylor—"Philip Von Artewelde."

"COME here, Rosalie; I want to have a very serious talk with you, my child," said Colonel Ashley, rising to meet his niece, as she entered, and leading her to a seat. "Now, my dear, I am very sorry for something that I have just heard. Nay, now, be calm, my dear—I am not going to scold. If I indulge in any sort of reproach, it must be in self-reproach for my own reprehensible carelessness. And so, my child, you are engaged to be married!"

Rosalie's face crimsoned, and her eyes fell to the ground.

"And what good, Rosalie, do you think will ever come of this imprudent step?"

The blush deepened on her cheek, but she did not reply.

"And what am I to think of this penniless young man, who uses his position in my family to wile the

affections of my niece—an heiress? Would it not be a fair and rational conclusion to set him down as an unprincipled fortune-hunter?"

Rosalie started. Her eyes flashed, her lips quivered. She exclaimed—

"Uncle, you do not believe that—you do not!"

"Would it not be fair to believe it?"

"Uncle, you are a noble-hearted being—you always recognise true nobility in others. Uncle, be just to Mr. Sutherland—nay, be just to yourself—unsay your words."

"Why, Rosalie, ninety-nine out of a hundred would call your lover a fortune-hunter."

"Oh, sir, they could not—they could not! knowing that Mr. Sutherland voluntarily renounced a large fortune for an idea of duty."

"At any rate, Rosalie, here are the naked facts: Mark Sutherland, being quite penniless, and well knowing that he has no way on earth of supporting a wife, makes the best use of his opportunities to woo and win an heiress!"

Rosalie dropped her face into her hands; her bosom heaved convulsively, as with some inward struggle, for an instant, and then lifting a countenance blushing and tearful, yet gently resolute, she said, in a faltering voice:

"I must make a confession, even if it cover me with humiliation. I must clear Mr. Sutherland, and take the blame where it truly belongs—upon my own head. Uncle, it was *my fault—my own—mine solely.*"

She paused, for her girl's nature would not bear the look the old man fixed upon her. She averted her

face, and with deeply flushed cheek and low, tremulous voice, resumed:

"I loved him, uncle. It was impossible, adoring moral heroism as I did, *not* to love him. God and angels know it, and you must know it, too"——

Again she paused for an answer, but Colonel Ashley did not reply, and she asked—

"Uncle! you exonerate Mr. Sutherland now, do you not?"

"Yes!" exclaimed Colonel Ashley, speaking as if waking up out of a reverie. "I exonerated him at first; I only wanted to see, Rosalie, whether you would have the honour and generosity to admit what you have. Good heaven! It seems to me fully one-half the love originates with the girls, although they have too much tact to let us know it! Now, there was your aunt: I was two years courting her. In truth, I thought I had a terrible time to win her heart; but listen, now. Some time after we had been married, she told me how many months she had been 'setting her cap' at me before I ever thought of her; and yet you see after she had once gained her point, and brought me to her feet, she kept me on the tenter-hooks of suspense for two years!"

"May I go now? Are you done with me, uncle?"

"No, my dear, I have not begun with you yet! I must give you a lecture! Don't you know it was a very unmaidenly thing of you to 'set your cap' at Mr. Sutherland?"

"Uncle, Mr. Sutherland evidently does not pronounce such a judgment, and therefore it is not so."

"No, poor fellow! because he doesn't know you *did* it. *He's* under the illusion that he did all the love-

making himself. That's natural. But now, then, Rosalie, how do you expect to get along in this world if you and Mark are married? You may know that *he* has no way of supporting you, and your guardian would see you both in the bottomless pit before *he'd* advance a cent of your fortune. Come, stop blushing and trembling, and answer me, my dear. I like people to be practical. What do you expect to do?"

"I do not know, uncle; I wish to leave it all to Mr. Sutherland. I have so much confidence in his judgment and in his regard for me, that I feel perfectly sure he will never draw me into any evil or suffering."

"Always faith in Mark! Suppose he should be going away in a few days, and suppose he should wish to marry and take you with him?"

"In that case, I should wish to go, dear uncle. Have you done with me now, sir?" asked Rosalie, really distressed by the length and closeness of the examination to which she had been subjected.

"Yes, you may go!" answered the old gentleman, rising, and holding the door open for her to pass. And Rosalie left the study.

In the lower hall she saw Mark Sutherland. He came to meet her, drew her arm within his own, and then they both walked into the garden.

"Well, dear Rosalie, do you know that I shall probably leave here in the course of a week?"

"My uncle has just hinted it to me. Where do you go?"

"Back to the village of S——, to take possession of an established office about to be vacated by my friend Lauderdale, who is coming on here, upon an errand of which you are already apprised, my dear Rosalie."

"Yes, I know mamma and Mr. Lauderdale will be united next month."

"Well, dear Rosalie?"

"Well?"

"I am going away in a week—must we then part?"

"Not unless you wish to go and leave me behind, Mark."

"Wish to leave you behind! In leaving you I should turn my back upon my guiding star, my inspiration, my life!"

"Then I accompany you, Mark."

"Your friends, Rose, will they not raise serious opposition?"

"No! I have neither father nor mother, and there are no other friends who have any wish to rule me, or any interest in doing so. My young step-mother is going to break the conventional tie between herself and me by marrying a second time; and with her *own* heart under the gentle influence of happiness, she will not be disposed to wring mine. As for my uncle, his son has brought a wife home now, who will be the mistress of his house, and he no longer requires my presence in that capacity. Indeed, I might even be considered in the way. And neither am I disposed to take a second place in a household of which I have hitherto been at the head. And that reminds me that I am at the head of it *still*, and that the duties of the position press upon me every hour—even now," said Rosalie, moving to go.

He caught her hand to detain her.

"Stay—do not leave me just yet. And so, my dearest Rosalie, when I go forth you will accompany me?"

"I have said that if you wish it—yes, I will accompany you."

"God bless you, dearest Rose!" burst from his lips with impassioned fervour. "But, my dear girl—my fairy, fragile girl—do you know what women in the far West have to encounter? hardships from which the most robust shrink; hardships from which the strong and beautiful India shrank; and will my pale, frail Rosalie dare them? and can she bear them?"

"India, with her glorious physique, is still a delicate daughter of the sun; she is like a gorgeous, brilliant exotic, that can bloom only in a luxurious conservatory; while I, with my wan face and fragile form, am yet a child of the wind—a wood-anemone, that only withered in a Southern hothouse—that will flourish and thrive in the wilderness."

"Heaven grant it may be as you say, dear Rosalie! It is impossible for me to give you up, to leave you; yet when I think of all you may have to suffer in being my companion, my heart is filled with anxiety and trouble. What did you say, dearest? Your sweetest words hide under low tones, just as the sweetest violets lurk under thick shade. What were you murmuring?"

"Only that I should not suffer half as much in meeting anything *with you*, as I should—as I should"—

"Well, dearest?"

"*In being left behind,*" said Rosalie, dropping her head upon his shoulder, as he caught her to his heart, and exclaimed, in a sudden burst of emotion—

"You shall *not* be left behind, my darling! my darling! By all my hopes of earth and heaven, I will never, never part from you!"

For a moment her head had rested on his breast in peace, and then she began to grow restless and twisted herself out of his embrace.

"Where now?" he asked, rather impatiently.

She looked at him with a comic expression of countenance, and said:

"It is a mortifying necessity to confess, but the truth is, the *ham* has to be taken out of soak and put on to boil for dinner, aud I have got to see it done; also there are gooseberry tarts and lemon custard to be prepared for the dessert, and I have got to go and do it. I wonder if uncle and cousin St. Gerald, who both love their palates, (low be it spoken,) will ever get anything fit to eat when the gorgeous Mrs. India takes my place!" and so, laughing and escaping, she ran off.

CHAPTER XVII.

PROGNOSTICS.

"With caution judge of probability;
Things thought unlikely, e'en impossible,
Experience often shows us to be true."—*Shakspeare.*

THE world-honoured and time-honoured bard whose lines are quoted above habitually looked beneath the mere plausible surface of possibility, and from the deep insight thereby gained, often put forth oracles at opposition to the usual routine of thought and expectation, yet which the eternal experiences of life continue to endorse as truths.

Were I writing a merely fictitious narrative, it would be in order now (after the custom-sanctioned manner of story-tellers) to describe the cruel opposition the lovers met from tyrannical parents, guardians, &c. But I am writing a true story—in this particular at least, "stranger than fiction"—and so have no such events to relate.

It happened as Rosalie had predicted—she met no serious opposition to the current of her affections. And if we look into the causes of that leniency on the part of her guardians, we shall not find their non-resistance so unaccountable, after all.

Left without father or mother—without near relatives or natural protectors, except a youthful step-dame, now too entirely absorbed in the contemplation of her own marriage, and an old uncle, to whom until two years past she had been a perfect stranger, Miss Vivian was thus not the first object of interest to any one around her.

It is true, that when Rosalie made known her purpose to Mrs. Vivian, the lady opposed the contemplated marriage with entreaties and tears; but finding that entreaties and tears only distressed the maiden without shaking her resolution, the young step-mother felt neither the right nor the inclination to attempt the arbitrary control of Miss Vivian's destiny. In yielding her final consent, the sweet-lipped lady said, amid falling tears—"Oh! were he well established, Rosalie, there is no one in the world to whom I would resign you with so much pleasure and comfort, as to him whom you have chosen. And well I know, and deeply I feel, that even now, from this low point of life—with you by his side—with you for an incentive

—with his high moral principles and intellectual faculties, and in this favoured country, he *must* rise, he *must* accomplish a brilliant destiny. But O, Rosalie, my child, in the meanwhile, I dread for you those toilsome, terrible first steps on the road to success! O Rosalie, pause! How much wiser to wait until he has conquered success!"

"And share his triumphs when I would not share his toils? No! no! no!"

"It would be so much safer, Rosalie!"

"And so much more *prudent* to allow him, in those moments of depression and despondency that must come, to think that it is only the *successful* statesman or jurist whose fortunes I would share, not those of the toiling aspirant! To turn a second India on his hands, and so forever and forever break down his faith in womanhood, in disinterestedness, and in truth! No! no! no! and a thousand times no! I have the blessed privilege of healing the heart that India wounded, of lifting up the brow that she bowed down, of strengthening and sustaining the faith that she weakened."

"If you should be a burden to him?"

"I will *never* be a burden to him! Providence will never so fail me. Mine is no sudden girlish fancy. It is a deep, earnest affection, arising from the profoundest sentiments of esteem and honour that ever woman felt for man—and the Father who inspired it will bless it. HE who in his benignant love said, 'It is not good for man to be alone,' will strengthen me to be a true help-meet for my husband."

"O Rosalie! be *practical*, child!"

"Be faithful first, and practical afterwards."

"Rosalie, you don't know what you brave! Fancy yourself and Mark now married, and housekeeping (forsooth!) in some wretched log-cabin or some lath-and-plaster shell of a shanty, in some new Western village. Fancy yourselves both down with that curse of new settlements, the ague, and each unable to help the other, and no one to give you a cup of tea, and perhaps with no tea in the house."

"That is a plain statement of a very dismal contingency, dear mamma. Yet I have no doubt that we should shiver and shake safely through it, as others have done. Yet it is not fair or wise to contemplate the worst possibility only. The Western pioneers are not always laid up *with* the ague and *without* tea!" said Rosalie, with a sparkle of fun in her eyes.

But in a moment after, the young girl's face grew serious, and she said, in a tremulous voice, "And besides, dear mamma, the very bugbears that you have evoked to frighten me from my journey only draw me on to go. Oh, do you think, mamma, that I could bear to stay here in safety, ease, and luxury, and know that he was far away, exposed to all the dangers, hardships, and privations of a pioneer life?"

"Nonsense! Danger is the natural element of man! to seek it is the nature of the creature!"

"Yes, mamma; but illness, fever, burning thirst, solitude, and helplessness, is *not*. And, if I thought that Mark were suffering all these things in some wretched Western cabin, and I not near to bathe his head and give him a cup of cold water, and to nurse and comfort and soothe him, but separated from him by thousands of miles of mountains and plains, I tell you, mamma, it would nearly break my heart! It is no

use! I *must* go with him, to meet whatever of good or ill Fate has in store. It can have nothing else so evil as a separation! Oh! I feel as if the worst calamity that could possibly befall me, would be a separation from him."

"Foolish girl! You love that broad-shouldered, robust man, as tenderly as a mother loves her babe!"

"I love him with a tenderness and sympathy that makes me tremblingly alive to his least sorrow or lightest pain; and yet mark you, mamma, with an esteem, with a depth of respect, with an honour that makes me aspire to his approbation as my highest good under Heaven!"

"O Rosalie, I will not farther oppose you! Yet, if you only had strength to endure the hardships of a Western life, I should feel less anxiety."

"Do not fear. I shall be able to endure, because 'my good will is to it;' and energetic, because I shall have a good motive; and healthy, because I shall be happy—because my heart will be right and at rest; for I say it again, because it is a great deep truth—'*Out of the heart are the issues of life!*' Yes, out of the heart are the issues of will, purpose, hope, health, strength, enterprise, achievement, SUCCESS! Out of the heart are the issues of all the good that can come back to us in time or eternity! on earth or in Heaven!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

DEPARTURES.

"We foresee and could foretel
Thy future fortune sure and well;
But those passionate eyes speak true, speak true,
And let them say what thou shalt do!"—*Browning.*

WITH Miss Vivian's uncle the difficulty was even less in obtaining his consent to the marriage with Mark Sutherland; and for the following reasons:—Colonel Ashley worshipped his proud, talented son, St. Gerald; and in his estimation no interests could compete for an instant with St. Gerald's interests. Colonel Ashley liked Rosalie well enough, and wished her well enough, and he was resolved to do all he could to insure her future happiness; yet if a slight risk of her welfare would insure the domestic peace and content of St. Gerald, Colonel Ashley was not one to hesitate between the conflicting interests of his niece and son. And that the marriage and departure of Mark Sutherland and Rosalie would tend greatly to tranquillise the life of the already disturbed husband, he could not *now* doubt.

It was dreadful to notice all the fatal effects of India's want of faith—it was awful to anticipate the final result. The once haughty and self-possessed woman was growing spiritless and nervous, subject to extremes of excitement and depression, moody, irritable, and flighty to the last degree. Her glorious beauty was *withering*, *wilting*, as you have seen some

richly-blooming flower wither suddenly without apparent cause—wither as if scorched by the burning breath of the sirocco. And the cause was apparent to every one around her, not excepting her bitterly-wronged and most wretched husband—to every one around her but Rosalie, whose perfect truth and innocence of heart shielded her from the suspicion of so much evil. If it was fearful to see the ravages that misery had made in the glorious beauty of India, it was not less so to observe its desolating effect upon the splendid genius of St. Gerald.

It was now a stirring time with aspiring young statesmen. A great national crisis was at hand; and it behooved all prominent politicians to be up and doing. St. Gerald, of all statesmen, should have been the most active, the most energetic. The eyes of his party were turned in anxiety towards him—the eyes of old grey heads, exhausted by a long life's service, and reposing on their well-earned laurels, and the eyes of young aspirants, panting to succeed to them, were all fixed upon St. Gerald, as their hope, their leader, and their deliverer! A senator already, he is carried up on the tenth wave of popular favour! Should he serve them well in this crisis, as he surely *can* if he *will*, for his talent, his eloquence, his influence is mighty among the nations; should he serve them well this time, there is no honour, no, not the highest in the gift of the people, to which he may not reasonably aspire! St. Gerald should be busy now—riding from town to town, from county to county, from State to State—convening the people, organising meetings, making speeches, drawing up resolutions, and doing all those multifarious acts by which states-

men in the recess of Congress touch the secret springs of the great political machinery, to keep it in motion, or haply to stop it altogether. St. Gerald should be up and doing, for now is the "tide" in his affairs, which "taken at the flood" may bear him on to fortune—aye, ultimately to the Presidential chair. St. Gerald should be active, stirring—for every day is destiny! But the young statesman is doing absolutely nothing. He is withering in inaction, because his bride is withering from his side.

Colonel Ashley perceives it all. And can he see the brilliant fortunes of his proud boy thus wrecked, if the sacrifice of Rosalie will help to avert the ruin? No, Rosalie! Only give yourself to Mark Sutherland, and coax him away to "parts unknown," to that "bourne whence no traveller returneth," if possible, and your uncle will smooth your path—he will try to persuade Clement Sutherland to forego his wrath and hate, and yield you up your own fortune—he will give you his blessing, and as much assistance of every kind as your independent spirit will permit you to accept.

Colonel Ashley, in fact, gave his full consent and approbation to the engagement of Mark Sutherland and Rosalie Vivian. He even joined Mr. Sutherland in persuading Rosalie to fix an early day for the solemnization of the marriage.

And, having settled that matter to his satisfaction, he next sought his friend, Clement Sutherland, and, having informed him of the betrothal, entreated him to make some provision from the bride's fortune for the young couple, or at least to settle an annuity upon

her until she should be of age, and enter upon the possession of her property.

But Clement Sutherland was proof against all arguments and entreaties. He locked his grim jaws fast, and would yield not a cent or a kind word. At last Colonel Ashley left him in indignation and despair. He did not *then* know that hate and revenge were not the only reasons that constrained the guardian of Mark Sutherland's young bride to hold a death-grip upon her purse-strings. No one *then* suspected that the money-grasping passion of the man had tempted him into ruinous speculations and embezzlement of the orphan's funds. "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof;" therefore, let them not dream it yet!

A week after this betrothal, Mr. Lauderdale arrived, to fulfil his engagement with the "sparkling" young widow. He was received with the utmost pleasure by his old friends and acquaintances, and welcomed with cordial hospitality by Colonel Ashley.

The next week witnessed two bridals. Mr. Lauderdale and Mrs. Vivian were married at Ashley Hall, by the pastor of the parish; and at the same time and place, by the same minister, Mark Sutherland and Rosalie Vivian were united in that bond that only death can sever.

The next day there were two departures: Mr. and Mrs. Lauderdale bade an affectionate adieu to their friends, and set out for their palace home in the South; and Mark Sutherland, and Rosalie, his wife, departed for their log cabin in the West.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE JOURNEY.

"If any two creatures grew into one,
They shall do more than the world has done;
Tho' each apart were never so weak,
Yet vainly thro' the world would you seek
For the knowledge and the might
Which, in such union, grew their right."—*Browning.*

"ROSALIE, my own blessed wife, you spoke the truth, or, rather, you applied it fitly—'out of the heart are the issues of life!' I feel and recognize it now. It is with far different emotions that I tread this deck, that bears us on to the great West, to those which oppressed and discouraged my soul two years ago. Then, dearest, I went forth alone, unloved, unloving; now your form hangs upon my arm, not an incumbrance, but a source of strength and joy. But, O Rosalie, how is it—how *will* it be with you? Can you love the wild West as you love your own sunny South?"

"'Westward the star of empire wends its way.' Who can look upon the shores of this great river, and note the many thriving new villages, without joyfully perceiving that? The South is a beautiful, a luxuriant region, where, 'lapped in Elysium,' you may dream your soul away; but the West is a magnificently vigorous land, whose clarion voice summons you to action. The South might be illustrated by a beautiful epicurienne, like India—the West only by a vigorous young Titan, like"——

"Whom?"

"Mark Sutherland!" answered Rosalie, with her eyes sparkling with delight.

They were standing upon the hurricane deck of the steamer Indian Queen, which was puffing and blowing its rapid course down the Ohio river. She was leaning on the arm of her husband; their heads were bare, the better to enjoy the freshness of the morning air; her eyes were sparkling, and her cheeks glowing with animation, and her sunny ringlets, blown back, floated on the breeze.

From their elevated site they commanded a view of both shores of the river, and turned their eyes alternately from the north to the south side.

"Does my dear Rosalie perceive any very remarkable difference in the aspect of these opposite shores?" asked Mark, bending his serious gaze upon her.

"Yes! I notice that one shore is thickly studded with thriving villages and flourishing fields, while the other is a comparative wilderness, with here and there a plantation house, and at long intervals a stunted town. What can be the reason of this?"

"Have you not already surmised the reason?"

The thoughtful eyes of Rosalie roved slowly over the scene, and then raised and fixed their earnest gaze upon her husband's face, and she said—

"It is so. There is only one set of persons in the civilized world who are more unhappy than the negroes."

"And they are"——

"Their masters."

"Yes Rosalie; and it is from among their number

that the first great successful reformer of the great evil must arise!"

"Why do you think so, Mark?"

"From *fitness:* we are unwilling to be taught our duty by an antagonist who reasons in partial ignorance of the facts, judges harshly and unjustly, and speaks not the truth in love so often as falsehood in hatred; and from *analogy:* all great successful reformers that the world has ever known, have arisen—not from the outside, but from the very midst of the evil to be reformed. Martin Luther sprang, not from among the Illuminati, but from the bosom of the Roman Catholic Church and priesthood. Nay, Christ himself came not in clouds of glory, clothed with the majesty of Godhead from Heaven—he arose from the midst of the people whom he came to redeem. So, Rosalie, the apostle of liberty must arise in the South."

She had listened to his words with loving and reverent attention, and now she fixed her gaze upon his eyes, and said, with penetrating earnestness—

"Mark Sutherland—'*Thou art the man!*'"

His very soul thrilled to her inspiring words and glance. He walked hastily from her side in agitation, but, soon returning, said—

"Nay, Rosalie, nay; this mission is not for me. I hear no voice from heaven calling me to the work!"

"*Have you listened?* The voice of God speaks not often in thunder from Heaven. It is a 'still, small voice,' breathed from the depths of your spirit. 'The word of God is within you.'"

He pressed his hand to his brow, throwing back the

dark hair that fell in waves around it. He was still agitated, excited.

"You trouble my soul even as the descending angel troubled the pool of Bethesda, Rosalie!" he said.

"Only to arouse its powers," she answered, carrying out the simile. While speaking, she anxiously sought his eyes, which at last met hers in a loving gaze, and then she continued,—"You have consecrated your mission as only such a mission can be consecrated, by a great sacrifice at its commencement—*can you pause* now?"

"Rosalie! Rosalie! why had I not known you better before? Why could I not have loved you only from the first? Why have the last two or three years of my life been lonely and wasted?"

"I had to grow up for you. I had to be left to mature in solitude and silence. I was a child three years ago."

"And you are a child still, young priestess of liberty! A child still in all things but the inspired wisdom of your heart!"

We have no time nor space to follow the course of this young pair, step by step, or to relate the many conversations they held together, in which hand upheld hand, heart strengthened heart, spirit inspired spirit, until the two grew into one—with one heart, soul, and spirit—one interest, purpose, and object.

The boat wended on her way, reached the mouth of the Ohio river, and turned up the Mississippi; and in five days more landed at the new village of S——, in the Northwest Territory. It was very early in the morning; the sun had not yet risen, and the fog still

lay, white and heavy, upon the wilderness shores—for here the wilderness, exuberant and luxuriant in vegetation, lay all around—and the new village of S—— was at the very outskirts of pioneer civilization. It was situated on the right or east bank of the Upper Mississippi, and the dwellings were scattered up and down the high bluff so oddly, that a passenger, looking upon the hamlet, said it seemed as if a giant had gathered a handful of houses and flung them at the bluff, and that they had settled at random where they had fallen.

Our young couple were the only passengers for S——, and they followed their baggage into the skiff, and were landed just as the sun arose, gilding the windows of the village, and lighting up into splendour all the glorious scene.

"See, Mark! It is a happy omen," said Rosalie smiling.

He pressed her hand, and turned upon her a look of unspeakable love, as he handed her to the shore.

There was a porter even in that rude, remote place. He took charge of the baggage, and led the way to the hotel on the top of the bluff.

It was a large, unfinished, two-story frame house, rudely built of rough pine boards, unpainted without, and unplastered within. Our young couple followed their guide, the porter, who was also the landlord, into the large bare parlour, which was also the kitchen of the inn. This room was scantily furnished, with a few rough chairs, a table neatly enough set out for breakfast, and a glowing cooking stove, in full blast, at which stood the cook, who was also the landlady, getting breakfast.

The rudeness of the whole scene disturbed Mark, for Rosalie's sake. She felt that it did. She looked at him with a gladdening smile, exclaiming—

"Oh! I like it, Mark. I like it so much. Everything is so new and strange, and so free and easy. And so large and grand," she added, going to one of the windows, and looking out, with delighted eyes, upon the magnificent virgin country. "The air is fine here, Mark. There is a springiness and life in it I never felt before, even on the mountains. And see, the fog is all dispersed already."

"Yes—it's allowed to be healthy in these parts; no ague here," said the landlady.

"And so near the river—that is strange," said Mark.

"Well, you see the winds blow mostly from the shore; and the fog—when there *is* a fog—settles on the other side of the river. And then, many folks allow that this, being a high, lime-stone country, is naterally healthy."

"Have you many boarders now?" inquired Rosalie, kindly interesting herself in the fortunes of her hostess.

"Only bachelors, for constant. Sometimes, when a boat-load of people arrive, we have a house full, till they gets settled or goes somers else," replied the landlady, setting the coffee-pot on the table, and ordering her lord and master to go to the door and blow the horn. She then invited her guests to sit down to breakfast, and had just begun to help them, when her other boarders, the bachelors—half-a-dozen robust, rudely-clothed, but earnest, intelligent-looking men—entered, and gathered around the table. The break-

fast was plain, but substantial, well-cooked, and abundant. And our young pair, as well as the bachelors, did justice to the fare.

After breakfast "the bachelors" left the table and the house, and went about their various businesses—some to their stores, some to their workshops. The landlady bustled about to wash up and clear away her breakfast service; and Mark Sutherland followed his young wife to the window, and said—

"And now, dear Rosalie, I must leave you here, *at least* till noon."

"You must?"

"Yes; there is much to be done, that must be done immediately. Lauderdale's deserted law-office must be opened and aired, and my sign—or *shingle,* as the folks here call it—tacked up, and the place generally prepared for the transaction of any business that may turn up. Then I have to write and send off an advertisement to the nearest newspaper—which, by the way, is published in a town thirty miles distant. And lastly, dear Rose, I have to look up a cabin, or part of a frame house, where 'two mortal mice,' like you and I, may go to housekeeping. Whether all this can be accomplished in a forenoon, or not, I do not know; but, at all events, I shall try to be back again at twelve. Good bye."

And, pressing her hand, he left her.

Rosalie seated herself by the window, and looked out upon the new country. From the river, and from the grove that crowned the bluff on which the village was situated, the country stretched eastward, out and out—a high, level, and limitless prairie, its flat and green monotony broken, at wide intervals, by groves

similar to this which surrounded S——, and relieved by countless millions of wild flowers, whose rich, gorgeous, and brilliant hues surpassed anything the observer had ever seen before.

"What is that splendid scarlet flower that grows so tall, and is as abundant on the prairie as clover in our own fields?" inquired Rosalie.

"I reckon you are talking about the prairie pink; but I haven't much time, myself, to take notice of flowers—'specially wild weeds," replied the landlady, rattling the dishes and tea-cups, and bustling about between the cooking stove, the table, and the cupboard.

"Are you not a Marylander?" asked Rosalie.

"Yes," said the woman. "How did you know?"

"By your speech."

Just at this moment the cry of a child commenced in an adjoining room, and continued during the whole of the hostess's morning work. She set aside the table, and began to sweep the room, raising a great dust from the dried and pulverized mud left by the bachelors' shoes. Rosalie thoughtlessly threw her pocket-handkerchief over her head, to protect her hair from the dust—thoughtlessly, for else she might have guessed it would displease the touchy pride of the hard-working pioneer woman.

"You don't like the dust—maybe you never saw a broom?" she asked, looking somewhat contemptuously at the young lady's delicate person.

"Oh! yes, I have," said Rosalie, gently, "and *used* a broom, too; but I always sprinkle the floor, and tie a handkerchief over my head before sweeping."

"And what do you take all that trouble for?"

"Because I dislike the dust to settle on my hair."

"Ha! ha! ha! You'll get out of that, if you *settle* in these parts," laughed the woman—not ill-naturedly this time—resuming her broom, and continuing her sweeping to its completion. Then she fired up the cooking-stove afresh; and while it was drawing, and roaring, and heating the room to suffocation in this sultry summer weather, she wiped down the chairs with her apron, and finally went into the next chamber and brought out her baby which was still squalling at the top of his voice. Giving him a piece of bread, she sat him in the cradle and went about her work, notwithstanding that the child threw away the bread, and was screaming louder than ever. Rosalie got up and lifted the babe, and took him to the window, where she sat down with him, and soon soothed his temper. The over-worked mother looked pleased, but said, deprecatingly—

"You needn't adone that; 'tain't a bit o' use; it'll only spile him. You'll find 'twon't do. And if ever you have a house of your own, and a baby of your own, and no one to tend to nyther but yourself—*mark my words*—just exactly when the loaf of bread is burning up in the oven, and the tea-kettle is boiling over, and the fat is catching afire in the frying-pan, that very time the baby's going to take to open its throat and squall you deaf. Let it squall! You ain't got twenty pair o' hands—you can't tend to everything at once. You'll find it so, too—mark my words—I never knew it to fail!"

"That is a very discouraging picture, indeed," said Rosalie; "nevertheless, I should try to foresee and prevent such a combination of perplexities."

"Oh! *would* you? You may thank goodness if, on top of all that, your man aint down with a spell of sickness, and the cow lost in the woods, and the well dry!" said the hostess, going to the door, and rapping, and calling out—

"John! *You* John!"

The landlord, *her* "man," obeyed the summons, entering from the bar-room. She met him with a sharp rebuke, for not bringing water enough, not splitting wood enough, not bringing the vegetables for dinner—"An' *it* drawin' on to 'leven o'clock—and he knew the bachelors would be home to dinner at twelve." And pushing the empty pail into his hand, she bade him make haste to the well, and be back in no time with the water, and so she hustled him out of the house. And soon the process of dinner-cooking was commenced; and in addition to the melting heat of the stove, the various mingled steams of boiling, stewing, and frying arose, and filled the summer air with thick, greasy vapour.

"Surely cooking-stoves were first invented by the demon," Rosalie could not help thinking, while she resolved, whenever she had to cook, it should be in an open fire-place, where the stifling vapours could ascend the chimney.

When dinner was ready, the sound of the horn summoned the same company, who entered first an adjoining shed, where they all washed their faces and hands, using the same tin basin and the same crash towel, and then—coarse, ruddy, healthful, and hungry—they came in, and gathered around the table. A few minutes after they had sat down, Mark Sutherland returned from his morning's ramble, and took his seat among them.

"How have you prospered in your enterprise to-day, Mark?" asked Rosalie, as they left the table.

"I have got through all I wished to do to my perfect satisfaction, except one thing."

"And that?"

"I have not been able to rent a house, or a part of a house, either for love or money! And so, dear Rosalie, I shall have to leave you again this afternoon, in order to renew my search. And I am afraid you find the time hang very heavily."

"Not at all, I assure you, Mark. I have been occupied and interested. Everything is so different here from what I have ever been accustomed to."

"Yes, very different, indeed!" said Mark Sutherland, with a sigh.

"Now, I didn't mean that," said Rosalie, smiling. "I meant that everything is so new and strange that I am entertained and amused every moment."

"Entertain and amuse yourself, then, as well as you can, until I come back in the evening; then, my love," whispered Mark, stealthily pressing her hand to his heart, as he left her.

The landlady rattled and clattered the dishes, and bustled about between table, cupboard, and cooking-stove, until she had cleared away the dinner-service. And then she proceeded to wash off the stove, raising a more offensive vapour than before. Then she swept the floor again; then she got a tub of water and a mop, and washed it all over. And then, after wiping and putting away the tub, and pan, and mop, and doing numberless other "last jobs," she finally cleansed her own face and hands, put on a clean apron, and sat down to nurse her baby, and talk to Rosalie. But

by this time the afternoon was so far spent, that the poor woman had not rested half an hour before it was time to get up, fire up the cooking-stove once more, and prepare supper for her family and her boarders, who would be back, she said, at six.

Rosalie was sympathetically fatigued, only to witness her labours, and she could not refrain from saying, as she once more took charge of the fretful, teething child—

"Indeed, you have a great deal to do. I do not know how you have strength to go through so much."

"Ah! you will know after a bit; wait a little. Lord, child, this is nothing at all! wait till wash-day," said the hostess, putting a great tray of flour on the table, and preparing to make bread.

And once more the process of cooking went on, with the same accompaniments of melting heat, stifling vapour, &c. And again the horn sounded, and the company gathered; but this time Mark Sutherland did not appear during the whole course of the meal—no, nor after it was over.

The table was cleared away, the room once more put in order, the candles lighted for the evening, and the men gathered in the kitchen, with their pipes, but still Mark did not come.

The landlady was rocking her baby to sleep, and entering at intervals into the conversation. At last she arose, and put her child to bed, and asked Rosalie if she should not like to be shown to her sleeping-room.

Rosalie replied in the affirmative; and the hostess lighted a candle and conducted her through the middle passage, and up the stairs, and opened a door to

the right of the landing, leading into a large room, unplastered, and nearly unfurnished. The room was divided in the middle by a temporary partition of hanging blankets. In the first division there were two double beds, covered with coarse patch-work quilts. The hostess passed between these, and, putting aside the blankets, led her guest to the interior division, which was smaller, and contained only one bed, covered like the others.

"You are to sleep here. Is there anything you want?" she asked, setting down the candle on a chest that served as toilet-table and washstand.

"Yes; water and towels, if you please," replied Rosalie.

"I'll get them for you in a minute. When do you look for *him* in?"

"Mr. Sutherland?—every moment!"

"Umph! humph! Now tell me the truth—I sha'n't blame you—it's none o' my business you know, but—*ain't* you and that young man a runaway match?"

"Why, no, certainly not," said Rosalie, reddening and laughing. "We were married in my uncle's house, and left it with his blessing and good wishes."

"That's right; you must excuse my asking, but you somehow looked so young and delicate for such a life as you're come to, that I couldn't help thinking that it must o' been a *love-match*."

Rosalie did not say that she hoped it *was* a love-match, and the landlady departed on her errand.

When she entered, bringing a tin basin and a crash towel, she put them down upon the chest, and said:

"I forgot to tell you that there are four bachelors sleep in the fore part of the room."

Rosalie looked up, surprised and shocked. This feature of western life was quite new to her, and she was totally unprepared for it.

The hostess saw her expression, and hastened to say —"Oh! they're very nice, steady young men; they won't make a noise, and keep you awake."

"But have you no private room unoccupied? Your house seems large; I should think there were at least four chambers on this floor?"

"Lor' bless you, child, so there are; but the floors ain't laid to none o' them except this one, which is the reason I have to put so many in it. Bless you, you mus'n't mind such things out here—nobody does—'tain't like where you come from, you know. And now, child, if there's nothing else I can do for you, I hope you'll excuse me, for indeed I am so tired I am almost ready to drop."

"Certainly; indeed, I am sorry to have given you so much trouble. Good night!"

"Good night!" said the hostess, taking up her candle, and disappearing through the opening folds of the blanket.

Rosalie did not wish to sleep. The not unpleasant restlessness, induced by a new and strange position, drove sleep for a time from her eyes. She drew the chest to the only window in her part of the room, and sat down, and opened it, and looked out upon the dark green prairie, that seemed to roll out like the ocean to meet the eastern horizon, where the harvest moon was just rising. The full moon! It was the only familiar object that met her eyes in all the strange, wild, lonely, beautiful scene—the only old acquaintance—the only thing she had known at home! Tears—but not of

sadness—rushed to her eyes. And then she thought of the vicissitudes of the last two years, and especially of the last two months; of her life of almost oriental luxury in the valley of the Pearl; of her home in the mountains of Virginia, where she was surrounded by all the advantages of wealth, taste, elegance, and comfort—where the eyes of affection watched her motions all day long, and many servants waited on her lightest bidding; and then of the roughness and ruggedness of her present lot. But not in repining, and not in regret did she compare these various phases of her life. She was happy if ever young wife was so. She looked upon the prairie, bathed in the silvery splendour of moonlight, with its mystic boundaries lost under the horizon, and its vastness and vagueness cast a glamour over her imagination, and charmed her with the fancy of wandering on and on in quest of its unknown limits, or as far as the vanishing boundaries might entice her. In the midst of these eyrie reveries sleep surprised her, and her fair head sank upon her folded hands on the window-sill.

She was awakened by a gentle clasp around her waist and a gentle voice in her ear, saying—

"My Rosalie—asleep at the window with the night dews falling on your head?"

She started, blushed, smiled, and exclaimed, "O, Mark, is it you? I am so glad that you have come!"

He let down the window, and placed his hand upon her head to see if it was damp, and asked—

"Why did you not go to rest, Rosalie?"

"Why, at first I was not sleepy; and I heard that there were strangers in the next room—or, rather, on

the other side of the blankets—and it seemed so odd. I could not get used to the thought in a minute, Mark."

He answered with a laugh and said, as he looked around—

"Yes, it is rather a rude place, with rather primitive accommodations, for the first and best hotel in the great city of Shelton. But, never mind; wait a bit. In a year or two you shall see this house well and completely finished, within and without, and the rooms all properly and comfortably fitted up and furnished, and the establishment provided with suitable waiters and chamber-maids; and in half-a-dozen years the host will probably have made his fortune."

"Well, Mark, and what success have you had this afternoon?"

"The best success. I have found a house, which I think will suit us exactly. Come to the window for a moment again. Do you see, immediately under the moon, that distant grove, that looks as if it were just against the horizon? You see the trees stand up straight and dark against the sky?"

"Yes, I see it."

"That is Wolf's Grove. It is not more than three miles from here. I can easily walk the distance twice a day. There is one building on the spot—a large log cabin, that was put up for a meeting-house, but has fallen into disuse since the rise of this village. The cabin is in good repair, and I have already engaged it. So, dear wife, we have only to wait for the arrival of our little furniture, to go to housekeeping. And to-morrow we will go over to Wolf's Grove, and review the premises.

CHAPTER XX.

THE LOG CABIN.

"A summer lodge amid the wild."—*Bryant.*

"JUDGE! your plunder's come—landed from the 'Sachem' this morning!" were the words with which the landlord greeted Mark Sutherland, as the latter, with Rosalie, descended to breakfast.

"Judge!" echoed Rosalie, looking inquiringly from one to the other.

Mark Sutherland laughed, and pinched her arm; and when their host had moved off in another direction, said:

"Nonsense, Rose. Yes, it was *I* whom he addressed as Judge—of course it was. Every one gets an honorary title of distinction here. I don't know what it is given for; certainly not to confer honour, but rather, I suppose, for the sake of civil brevity, as it is easier to say 'Judge' than 'Mr. Thompson.' Now, if I had ever belonged to any military company—if only as private in militia, they'd dub me here 'Cap'n,' if not 'Major,' or 'Gen'l:' and if I were county constable, instead of law student, they must still call me 'Judge.'"

And just then, as if in illustration of Mr. Sutherland's words, several men entered, eagerly inquiring for "the Colonel," meaning the landlord. And when the host came forward to know their will, several speaking equally together, exclaimed:

"Colonel, we want your guns, and your dogs, and your company, this morning, to hunt a pack of wolves that chased Jones's boy almost into the village!"

"A pack of wolves!" exclaimed the boarders, gathering around.

"Jones's boy!" ejaculated the landlord, in amazement.

"Riding from McPherson's mill;"

"So close, they caught at the boy's boots;"

"Foremost one hung upon the horse's flanks;"

"Wounded;"

"Nothing but the animal's speed saved him;"

"Wet with sweat;"

"Miraculous 'scape;"

"Jones's boy," &c., were the broken sentences with which the tale was told by the several informants, all speaking at once.

"Well, friends, long as there's no damage done, I don't see any use in being so excited. As to my guns and dogs, you can have them in welcome; but as to my company, I have promised the Judge here to drive him and his wife over to see their house. And I expect they will want me to haul the plunder over too—won't you, Judge?"

Mark Sutherland bowed.

After a little discussion, they urged "the Judge" to join their hunt, and Rosalie privately squeezed Mark's arm in disapproval. Mark declined; and, after a little more altercation, the visitors at length departed, with three or four of the bachelor boarders, who quaffed each a "hasty" cup of coffee and followed.

When this little disturbance was over—

"I did not know," said Mr. Sutherland, "that the

wild denizens of the forest ever ventured so near the settlements."

"No more they don't," replied the host; "only this go, I s'pose, the Injuns have been hunting of 'em and druv 'em close on to the village. We'll git shut of 'em agin after a bit."

When breakfast was over, "the Colonel" geared up the carryall to take his young guests across the prairie to Wolf's Grove. It was a fresh, bright, blithe morning, scarcely seven o'clock, when they set out, and the prairie still glistened with dew. There was no road to Wolf's Grove; but the driver took a bee-line over the level ground, and the wheels of the carry-all tracked deep through the sedgy grass and gorgeous wild flowers.

"It looks strange to me," said Rosalie, "to see these glorious flowers—which, if they were in our eastern gardens, we should cherish with so much care—driven down and crushed by thousands under our wheels."

"It is but the sign of the fall of the forest before the advancing march of immigration," observed Mark.

"It reminds me, somehow, of the triumphal entries of the sanguinary old conquerors of ancient times, whose chariot wheels passed ruthlessly over the fallen, the dead, and the dying."

Mark smiled at her fancy, and the driver took his pipe out of his mouth, and turned and looked at her in perplexity.

"But, Rose, when you look around you at the countless millions of flowers left blooming—nay, I mean to say, when you think of the countless millions

of trees left standing—does it not give you an exultant sense of the exhaustless wealth, the boundless resources of our prairies and forests?"

"I know *something* inspires me with unlimited hope just now. There is, certainly, as far as the comforts and elegances of civilized life are concerned, a look of great privation in the village and among the people we have just left. And yet—and yet—whether it is because the inhabitants are mostly young and full of health and hope, or that the houses are all new, or that the primeval wealth and exuberance of nature is not only undiminished, but almost untouched; whether it is any or *all* of these causes, I do not know, but certainly to me there is about this country an air of youth, vigor, hope, promise, unlimited, indescribable! I feel its influence, without being able to explain it. It seems to me that here, the age, the weariness, and the sorrow of the old world has been left behind. That this is a breaking out in a new place, or rather that this country and people, and we ourselves, are a new creation, fresh from the hand of God, and with a new promise! Let us be faithful to our part of the covenant. Oh, let us be faithful; let no sin, selfishness, injustice of ours cause us to lose the glorious promise!"

A pressure of the hand, at once approving, kind, and warning, from Mark Sutherland, reminded Rosalie that they were not alone.

A little farther on, the sprightly eyes of the girl lighted upon a large, speckled bird, standing still, almost in their road.

"What a beautiful bird! What is it?" inquired Rosalie.

"It's a prairie chicken. Now, I want you just to take notice o' that creetur; it won't take the trouble to move—you'll see," said the man, driving slowly past, and leaving the bird behind them, standing still.

"They must be very tame," said Rosalie.

"No, they ain't nyther, but they've got a heap o' sense. We are driving. Now, if I had o' been afoot with a gun, or anything that looks like a gun to *it*—say a stick—why, it would a-taken wing in a minute. I've took notice of it often and often. Same case with a deer—it'll stand right still and look at you going past with your team; but only just let it catch its eyes on you when you're walking 'long o' your gun, and it's off in an instant. Well knowing of that, you see, I often just quietly lays my gun down in the bottom of the wagon, to be ready for the creeturs."

In desultory talk like this, which nevertheless gave our young immigrants some little insight into the manners of the country, they passed over the three miles of intervening prairie land, and entered Wolf's Grove.

Wolf's Grove was not what its name indicated—an isolated piece of wood, similar to those that at wide intervals dotted the prairie; it was rather a portion of that vast, unbroken, interminable forest, projecting here into the open prairie like a point of land into the sea, but stretching back and back hundreds of miles, and even to the banks of Lake Superior. Here the old primeval forest trees were of gigantic, almost fabulous size, but thinly scattered, and standing singly apart, like the outposts of a vast army.

Half a mile within the Grove, where the trees were

thicker, stood the cabin originally built for a school and meeting-house, by the first settlers. There was not a wood-shed, a fence, a fruit tree, nor a foot of cultivated ground, around it; nor a house, nor a field, within three miles of it.

Mark Sutherland and Rosalie alighted, and entered the house, while the driver secured his horses and gave them water. The cabin was unusually large and well built, being nearly thirty feet square, and constructed of huge logs, well hewn, and well cemented. The cabin fronted south, where one door admitted into the only room; opposite this door, in the north wall, stood the large, open fire-place. The room was lighted by two windows, fronting each other, east and west. The floor was well laid, and a step-ladder in the corner, between the fire-place and the east window, led up to a loft. The house was in good repair, with the single exception of the broken windows.

"A very different abode from that you have left, for my sake, dear Rosalie; and yet, if you only knew, as I do, how much better this is than any other log cabin to be found anywhere! Why, Rose, it is a palace, compared to some."

"I know it is; and I only wonder that it has been left so long untenanted, while the meanest hovels have been all taken up."

"Why, you see, my dear, this house is too remote from the village for any one but a farmer, and as it stands upon the reserved school lands, of course, no farmer can cultivate the ground."

"Will it not be too far for *you?*"

"With me it is different. I like to walk, and do not grudge my steps. The three miles' walk, morning

and evening, will do me good. Nay, more; that exercise will be a necessary relief from the sedentary life of the office. My only anxiety will be in leaving you here alone, all day. Will you be very lonesome, dear?"

"Lonesome? I don't know. I should be lonesome *anywhere* without *you*, Mark. But that is a very foolish weakness, and must be overcome, of course."

"But you will be afraid to stay here all day long alone?"

"Afraid? Of what? Why should I be? Is there any cause of fear?"

"No, dear; no cause for fear; but, as Emilia said of jealousy, one might say of fear:

> 'That fearful souls will not be *answered* so;
> They are not ever fearful for a *cause*,
> But fearful for they are fearful'"——

"Well, I am not afraid with or without a cause. A child would not be afraid in this quiet place," said Rosalie, going to one of the windows, and looking out into the waving woods.

"How still—how very still—no sound to be heard but the rustle of the leaves and the ripple of water, that must be near!" she continued, looking from the window, while Mark walked about the room and made notes of glass, putty, a door latch, and such little matters that would be needed to be brought out with their furniture. Then they went out where the driver stood watering his horses, and where the only sign of previous human presence was afforded by the narrow grass-grown path, leading down into a deep dingle, where the ripple of water was heard.

"If you'd like a drink, there's one of the finest springs in the whole country down there," said the landlord, taking a tin cup from the wagon and handing it to Mark. Rosalie was already going down the path. They reached the spring, and found the water cold and clear as crystal. They drank, and congratulated themselves upon this great blessing, and then went up to the cabin, and, as their host was in a hurry to be off, they entered the carryall to return to the village.

"Well, are you going to take it?" asked the driver, looking around as he took the reins and started.

"Why, of course. I had *already* taken it."

"I knowed *that;* but I thought when *she* saw how lonesome it was, she'd object. 'Tain't many women—I can tell you *that*—who'd agree to live out there, by themselves, in *that* lonesome place, and you gone all day long."

"I am sure my wife prefers it to an inferior cabin nearer the village."

"Yes, indeed, I do," said Rosalie.

"Well, every one to their taste," observed the landlord, cracking his whip, and making his horses fly.

They reached home in good time for dinner.

The afternoon was employed by Mark Sutherland in collecting together necessary provisions, to be taken with their furniture to the cabin; and by Rosalie—seated by the window of *her* part of the upper chamber—in hemming napkins, preparatory to her housekeeping, and in looking out upon the prairie basking in the afternoon sun, and upon her distant home, Wolf's Grove.

In the evening the hunters returned from an unsuc-

cessful expedition; and fatigued and mortified, and inclined to be silent upon the subject of their defeated enterprise, they gathered around the supper table. But the curiosity of the hostess, and the perseverance of the host, at last elicited from them the fact that they had not even hit upon the track of the wolves.

The next day was fixed upon by Mark Sutherland and his wife for their removal to Wolf's Grove.

CHAPTER XXI.

GOING TO HOUSEKEEPING.

All the forenoon of the next day, Mr. Garner, the landlord, was absent with his team; so that our young people were obliged to defer their removal until the afternoon; and they spent the intervening hours in reviewing their possessions and supplying those few last articles that always are forgotten in a first preparation.

At two o'clock, the capacious wagon of the hotel stood before the door, laden with furniture, trunks, provisions, and so forth. A tolerable seat was arranged for Rosalie among the baggage; but Mark, on foot, accompanied the landlord, who walked at the head of his horses. It was a slow progress; the horses, already fatigued with their morning's work, never got out of a walk; so that it was nearly four o'clock when they entered Wolf's Grove and drew up before the log cabin. While his horses were resting, Mr. Garner

assisted Mark to unlade the wagon, and take in the furniture and arrange the heaviest part of it. Then, having watered his horses, he shook hands with his late guests, wished them good luck, jumped upon his seat in front of the wagon, and drove off.

And Mark and Rosalie found themselves standing, looking at each other, alone, in the forest cabin. It was a moment in which flashed back upon each the memory of their whole past lives, and the intense realization of their present position. A doubt, whether to weep or smile, quivered over Rosalie's features for an instant. Mark saw the tremor of her lips and eyelids, and drew her to his heart; and she dropped her head upon his shoulder and smiled through her tears. He whispered, cheerily—

"Never mind, dear; you will be one of the honoured pioneer women of the West. And when this wilderness is a great Commonwealth, and Shelton is a great city, and I am an old patriarch, we will have much joy in telling of the log cabin in the wilderness, where we first went to housekeeping. And now, let us see if we cannot get this place into a little order."

The room, as I said, was large and square, with a window east and west, facing each other, and a stone fire-place north, facing a broad door south. The walls were unplastered, but well planed and cemented, and grey with time and use. The floor was of rough but sound pine plank. A broad shelf over the fire-place served for a mantel-piece. In the corner between the east window and the fire-place stood the step-ladder leading to the loft. In the opposite corner, between the west window and the fire-place, were three triangular shelves, that did duty as cupboard or beaufet.

Finally, the sashes of the windows were good, but the glass was all broken out of them. This was the state of the room when Mark and Rosalie looked around it. Mark went up the step-ladder to examine the loft, but found it so low that even a woman could not stand upright in it. It was therefore given up, except as a place to stow trunks, boxes, &c.

Then they began to arrange their furniture. It was very easily done, they had so little—a bedstead with its appointments, a table, a half-dozen chairs, and almost everything else in half-dozens. The form of the room favoured the convenient arrangement of these things. The bedstead had already been put up in the corner between the west window and the door, and the table placed in the corresponding corner between the door and the east window. They set the chairs in their places, and then Mark began to unpack the china, while Rosalie arranged it on the shelves of the corner cupboard. There were several things—remnants of past refinement—out of keeping with their present condition; among them, the French china—that looked upon their rough pine shelves as the elegant Mark Sutherland and the fair and delicate Rosalie looked in their rude log cabin—and the superb white Marseilles counterpanes, whose deep fringes touched the rough plank floor; and the tester and valance of fine and beautiful net-work; and lastly, the tamboured curtains that lay upon the chairs, ready to be put up when Mark should have mended the windows. These were certainly out of place here, but it could not be helped; they were Rosalie's little personal effects, endeared to her by long possession, and by their having been the property, and some of them

—the tamboured curtains and the net valance, for instance—the *handiwork* of her mother. By sunset, all was arranged, except two matters—the broken windows, with which now the young master of the house began to employ himself, taking out the sashes and laying them upon the table, and laying pane after pane in their places; and the barrel of flour which stood in the middle of the floor, with a quarter of beef laid across the top of it—both waiting to be put away out of sight, in a proper place; that is, supposing a proper place could be found on premises where there was neither storehouse, pantry, nor shed, nor even a second room.

Mark busied himself with the window sashes, trying pane after pane in the empty forms. But at length, turning around, he smiled and said—

"It's no use, Rose; I'm not a glazier, and so carefully as I thought I measured the sashes and the glass, they will not exactly fit; and I have no diamond here to trim them, and so I suppose they must be left until to-morrow."

And he replaced the empty sashes in the window frames. Then, seeing the neglected barrel of flour, he wheeled it up against the wall, near the door, and said it must remain there for the present; and Rosalie took a coarse, clean table-cloth and spread it over the beef, that still lay upon the top.

"And now, dear," he said, looking around, "I believe we are as well fixed as we can be for the present. Nothing remains but to get supper; and, as I was out here in the West two years before you ever saw it, I shouldn't wonder if I hadn't to give you some instruction."

"*You* teach me to cook! *I*, my uncle's housekeeper for two years, while you were wandering about from town to town!" exclaimed Rosalie.

Mark laughed, and bade her remember that when she was "uncle's" housekeeper she had experienced cooks at her command, and that her housekeeping duties and responsibilities consisted in carrying the keys and ordering what she pleased to have for dinner. And he further advised her to recollect that she was not to snap up her liege lord in that way, either! Whereupon Rose bade him mind his business and his briefs; for that she should snap him, and box his ears, too, whenever the spirit moved her. She! Mark snatched her, laughing, to his bosom, and half suffocated her with kisses, and then holding her tight, bade her do her wickedest.

"And, Rose," he exclaimed merrily, "I do not know why it is; but out here, in this cabin of the wilderness, with nobody but you for company, I feel as if the restraints of society and of maturity had fallen away, and restored me to the freedom and the wilfulness and the irresponsible wickedness of my boyhood. And *oh!* little one, if you were only a great deal taller and stronger, what a wrestle we would have!"

And he gazed down on her there, standing within his arms—so small, so fair, so perfectly helpless, so utterly in his power—and all the wantonness of youth fled from before her helplessness and her beauty, and a flood of unutterable tenderness rushed over his heart; and, still gazing upon her with infinite love, he said—

"God forever bless you—you little, little, wee thing;

you delicate, beautiful creature; and God forever forsake me, if ever, willingly, I give you a moment's pain or sorrow!"

Blushing deeply, Rose withdrew herself from his now yielding clasp, and, to cover her girlish embarrassment, took the new bucket and put it in his hands, requesting him to go to the spring, and bring her fresh water to fill the tea-kettle, and adding—

"You shall see what nice biscuits and what nice tea I can make."

Mark took the pail and went out, and disappeared down the path.

Rosalie, observing the floor littered, looked around for the broom to sweep it up; and then laughed to find that, with all their getting, they had got no *broom*.

Mark came in with the pail of water, set it down, and said he would go and get some brush to kindle a fire. And while he was gone, Rosalie put water in a basin to wash her hands preparatory to making the biscuits; and *then* she discovered that they had forgotten *soap* also. And while she stood in dismay, wondering what else might have been omitted, Mark re-entered with a pile of brush on his shoulders, "like Christian with his bundle of sin," he said. He threw it down upon the hearth, and began to look around, and then he broke into a gay, prolonged laugh.

"What's the matter, Mark? Are you daring to laugh at me, with my sleeves and skirt tucked up?"

"O, Rosalie, we have heads, child! we have heads —and so have cabbages, when they have come to maturity."

"Well, don't laugh *yours* off your shoulders, but tell me what you're laughing *at!*"

"We have not brought a match nor a candle."

"Oh! no! You don't say so?"

"It is a positive fact."

"We have forgotten soap and brooms too; we have forgotten *every*thing."

"No, not *every*thing; only a few things that make everything useless."

"What's to be done? We can't cook supper to-night, or even breakfast to-morrow morning, without a fire."

"No. Let's see—I know if one rubs two pieces of wood together long enough, they will ignite; and I know of other processes by which fire may be kindled; but, after all, I think the quickest and the surest way will be for me to go back to Shelton this evening, and get the matches; and then I can also get soap, a broom, and my pistols, which were likewise forgotten."

"Go back to Shelton this evening! Walk three miles to Shelton, and back this evening, and the sun already down! You will be tired to death."

"No, dear; I can walk that three miles in about an hour, get the things in ten minutes; borrow Mr. Garner's saddle-horse to ride back, and take him home again in the morning, when I go to the office. And my brave little girl will not be afraid to stay here a a few hours by herself?"

"Afraid? No; surely not."

"You can fasten the door with this wooden pin, if you wish to do so."

"Oh! I shall not wish to fasten the door. I shall

sit on the sill and watch the stars, and see if I can read our future destiny on their orbs, and wait for the moon to rise, and for you to come."

"No, you must not do that, Rose. The woods are damp, and the evening air chill. And, now I think of it, this cabin will be too cool for you, with this draught through the open windows. Let's see if we cannot do something with them. If you had anything to tack up against them, Rosalie?"

She went to a box and took out two sheets, each of which, doubled, was tacked against a window, and because the breeze still lifted them, a few tacks were driven in the sides and bottoms of these temporary blinds, to keep them down. Having finished that job, Mark pulled down and buttoned his wristbands, put on his coat, kissed Rosalie, bade her keep up her heart, for that he should be back at ten, or a little after, and departed. She stood at the door, watching him, until he disappeared within the intervening trees, and then she turned and entered the darkening house.

Did Mark Sutherland—did Rosalie—dream of all that should happen before they should meet again? Did either imagine the grim horror of the next few hours? It was a night that *one* of them never, in after life, forgot—whose fearful memory haunted thoughts by day, and visions by night, when the dreamer would start from sleep, and, with convulsive shivers and cold perspiration, gaze around in terror that could not be reassured.

CHAPTER XXII.

A NIGHT OF FEAR.

ROSALIE entered the house, and shut the door behind her. It was very dark, for twilight had departed, and the moon had not yet arisen. Although the door and windows were closed, the room was still sufficiently cool, and Rosalie might have remained pleasantly seated in her sole rocking chair, and wrapped in reverie, through all the lonely hours until her husband should return, but for one trifling circumstance; trifling in itself, yet fraught with the most appalling danger, and the most ghastly consequences. The fresh carnal smell of that quarter of newly-killed beef that lay across the top of the barrel, only lightly covered over with the table-cloth, began to fill the closed room, and soon became intolerable to Rosalie's fine senses.

For the sake of fresh, pure air, she went and opened the door, and sat down upon the door step. There she sat, gazing into the dark mysterious depths of the forest, or up to the deep blue, starlit sky, listening to the chirp of the field-cricket, the grass-hopper, and the katydid, those merry little night warblers, who begin their concerts when the birds have finished theirs—and remembering all her past life, enjoying her present, and dreaming and hoping of the future. She thought of her palace home, where, circled with affection, she had still wandered with a strange unrest, and wasted with a vague longing; she thought of her pre-

sent home, as poor, as humble, as rude, as it well could be, yet yielding a fulness of content—of *measureless* content—that filled her heart to overflowing with gratitude and love to God for the joy and peace that abounded. And she thought of their future; it might bring toil, privation, penury, disappointment, and death, but it could not deprive her of the jewel of her soul, LOVE. That word—that idea—was still the centre of her soul's circle, around which thought and feeling still revolved. She sank into a dim, delicious reverie, and, wrapped in blissful dreams, the world around her disappeared. The cheerful chirp of the crickets and the katydids was no longer heard—the deep blue, star-lit sky no longer watched—the dark, mysterious forest, with its ever untrodden depths, no longer seen. She was like a slumberer "smiling as in delightful visions, on the brink of a dread chasm." There was a far-off, light, multitudinous tramp, like the patter of distant rain-drops. She knew it not, she heard it not. "Senseless as the dead was she, to all around, beneath, above." Senseless as the dead—aye, senseless as the dead—to the near approach of a dreadful death! Oh, surely this was not her unguarded hour! She would not be left to perish in her youth and beauty—to perish while wrapped in her visions of love and devotion. Oh, surely her guardian angel must have been at his post. He was! For, as she sat there in the door, her thin white dress distinct in the darkness, her fair pale face bowed on her hand, and her beautiful light hair damp with dew—a shudder thrilled her frame. She arose, and, shivering with a damp chillness, retired into the house; but before she

shut the door, she turned her eyes once more from earth to sky, and—

"It is a most beautiful night," she said; "a lovely night, 'not made for sleep.'"

A singular low noise caught her ear, and ceased.

"That sounds like a sudden fall of rain stopped," she said, and paused to listen. Not hearing the noise again, she closed the door; and without in the least degree intending to do it, quite mechanically she did the wisest thing that could have been done. She *barred* the door, and then she seated herself once more in the rocking-chair. The room was intensely dark. The faint light that stole in at the sheeted window only seemed a thinner blackness. She sat gently rocking to and fro, and gradually relapsing into reverie.

It was soon rudely broken through. Still like the sudden heavy fall of rain-drops on forest leaves, multitudinous footsteps thronged pattering around the cabin—pawing at its walls! Startled, astonished, yet not alarmed, Rosalie listened. Then a low ground swell of a growl arose, murmuring on the air, and thrilling every nerve with awe. It was low, deep, and threatening, as the thrilling bass string of the harpsichord when rudely swept by some idler's hand. Rosalie stood up; and, resting her hand upon the rocking-chair, listened more intently. The sound ceased—all was still as death. She crept cautiously to the window, and, pulling aside slightly the edge of the sheet-blind, where it was tacked to the side of the frame, she looked out. The night was deeply dark, though the sky was still studded with stars—*the ground was also lighted with stars*—twin stars, scattered all

about. At first sight she took these for lightning-bugs; but, as she gazed, she knew them to be the phosphoric, excited eyes of couchant wild beasts. And, at the same instant that she made this appalling discovery, the whole pack burst, in full cry, upon the cabin, tearing at the walls, and howling furiously with hunger, rage, and frantic desire. Rosalie tottered back to her chair, and sank into it. The whole horrible truth, in all its detail of cause, effect, and consequence, burst with overwhelming force upon her senses. It was a pack of hungry wolves!—the same pack that the Indian hunters had pursued into the neighbourhood of Shelton—the same pack that had been the terror of the settlement since their discovery near it. They had been drawn to the cabin by the scent of blood from the newly-killed beef, and there was no light in the house to fright them off. Sick—oh, sick, and nearly swooning with deadly terror—Rosalie still charged her soul "to hold her body strengthened" for the crisis.

She looked around in the darkness, trying to think of some means of defence, security, or escape, but found none. If she should open the door and fly from the house, she must inevitably fall an instant victim to their rapacity. That plan was rejected at once, as not to be thought of, except as the drowning think of catching at straws. And then her eyes flew wildly around in the darkness for means of defence or retreat. Alas! there was not a chance of either. She could go up into the loft, or climb up into the chimney, or bury herself in the bed; but an instant's reflection convinced her that there was no place within the walls to which the fell wolves would not climb with more

facility than she could, and no retreat to which their keen scent would not guide them, and from which they would not drag her to death. And oh! in the midst of all her desperate thoughts, their frantic onsets to the walls, their horrible baying, barking, and tearing, nearly drove her mad with terror. Every instant she expected death! How thin, how slight the barrier that kept them out! The moment they should chance to strike the broken windows, protected only by the thin sheets, and so find the way of entrance, that very moment must the cabin be filled by the hungry and ravening beasts. For an instant, perhaps, the beef, whose scent had drawn them to the spot, might divert them from herself, but only for an instant, for that flesh would be swiftly torn in pieces and devoured; and then what a fate would be hers! To perish so sharply and suddenly, and by such a ghastly death! And not of herself alone did she think in that hour of dread, but of all whom her death would appal and afflict; and of him, oh! of him whom it would most awfully bereave. For herself—for her own person—it would not be so dreadful, after all, she thought. The sharp agony would soon be over—in a very few minutes most likely—and then all that was mortal and perishable of her—her small, frail body—would be totally destroyed; and her soul, she trusted, would be at rest. But, of the distant loved ones, whose hearts would thrill with horror at hearing of her fate, and of him whose life would be made desolate by her loss—whose arm, whose *brain* would be stricken powerless by the terrible doom of her who was at once his inspiration and his object—this, oh! *this* was the bitterness of death! But oh! the frightful, the mad-

dening howls of the demoniacs outside scattered all her thoughts so quickly, it was impossible to reflect to any good end. But suddenly athwart the stormy chaos of deafening noise, despairing terror, and distracting thought, darted, like lightning, an inspiration! She had grown conscious that the storm outside had drawn itself to a point nearest the spot where the barrel and the meat stood; and the wolves were scratching and tearing furiously, and hurling themselves at the wall, baying all the while in full cry, or barking and fighting among themselves, like demons. And now her idea was further to decoy them from the windows, the weak parts of the cabin. She went to the barrel. She could not lift the quarter of beef, but she pushed it off, letting it fall heavily upon the floor. For an instant the noise outside ceased, but soon burst forth again with renewed violence. She dragged the beef close as she could get it to the door, and then she got a knife, and close to the floor she cut the flesh in gashes, so that the juices might run under the door to the outside, and draw and hold the frantic wolves to that spot. For this she knew was the safest place of attack—it was the farthest removed from the windows, and the door was too strong and well barred to give way. She knew this, but yet when it rattled violently at their furious assaults, her very heart nearly died within her.

She thought of her husband's return with extreme anxiety; she feared full as much as she hoped it. She had perfect faith in his courage and presence of mind, and she knew, besides, he would be well armed when he should return; and yet she sickened with fear for him when she thought of that return. She remembered

that he said he would be back by ten. She wished to know the hour. It was still pitch dark, but she went to the chimney shelf, and opened the clock, and with her delicate fingers and nice touch she felt for the hour and the minute hands, and for the raised figures, and ascertained that it was already after ten. She felt again, and was sure there was no mistake. After ten, and Mark not yet returned! What could have detained him? This source of anxiety was beginning to add its sting to the others, when a new ground of alarm, of despair, fixed her panic-stricken where she stood. The wolves, who had not ceased to howl and cry, and hurl themselves against the walls, now led by a surer instinct, were careering around and around the cabin, leaping up at the walls, and leaping up at the window-sashes, which shook at each bound! The clamour outside was now deafening, appalling. She heard the frail sashes shake—she heard them give way—she heard the whole hungry, horrible pack burst with full cry into the room; and mortal terror whirled away her consciousness, and, with an agonizing cry to Heaven, she fell to the floor insensible.

* * * * * * *

When consciousness came back, Rosalie found herself lying upon her bed. The room was quiet, cool, and dimly lighted by a candle on the hearth, whose glare was shaded from her eyes by an intervening chair with a shawl thrown over it. Mark was standing by her, bathing her face with cold water. As memory returned, she shuddered violently several times; and her first words, gasped out, were, "The wolves! Oh! the wolves!"

"They are gone, love; put to flight!" said Mark Sutherland, soothingly.

"And you—*you?*" she asked, wildly gazing at him.

"Safe, as you see, love!" he answered, as he lifted her head, and placed a glass of cold water to her lips.

"How did it happen, Mark?" she questioned, as he laid her head once more upon the pillow.

"What happen, love?"

"My escape, your safety, and the flight of the wolves."

"Dear Rose, we had better not revert to the subject again to-night. Try to compose yourself."

"I cannot! If I close my eyes and lie still, I hear again those dreadful howls—I see again those glaring eyes and ghastly fangs—I live over again the terrible danger."

"My dear Rosalie, there was really no very great danger, and it was all over as soon as I reached the spot with fire-arms," said Mark, calmly, and wishing to depreciate the peril she had passed, and restore her to quietness.

"Yet tell me about it—if you will talk to me about the escape I shall not brood over the appalling"——

She shuddered, and was silent.

"There is really very little to tell, Rosalie. As I approached the house on my return home I heard the howling of the wolves. I surmised the truth instantly—that they were the same pack the neighbours had been after for the last few days—that the smell of the fresh meat we had brought over the prairie and

into the forest had decoyed them to the cabin, from whence there was no light to scare them. I hurried on as fast as possible, and soon came upon the cabin, and found a pack of perhaps a dozen wolves baying around the house, and leaping and scratching at the walls. They were prairie wolves—a small, cowardly race—who go in packs, and who are generally very easily driven off. I first of all picked up and threw a billet of wood at them. I forgot, dear Rose, that our window had no better defence than a sheet, or else I never thought of it at all, for when I threw the piece of wood, it not only passed through the pack of wolves, but on through the window-place, too—scattering the animals, but also making an opening, through which several of them, in their efforts to escape, leaped into the house"——

"It was then I fainted," said Rosalie.

"I found you lying on the floor, insensible."

"But you and the wolves?"

"A very short skirmish served to put the enemy to flight. I succeeded in killing only two of them—two that had leaped before me in at the window—the others escaped."

As Rosalie continued to tremble, he added:

"They are really not a formidable antagonist, my dear. I have heard a pioneer say, that he would as lief as not tumble himself, unarmed, down into a dingle full of them, and trust to his muscular strength and courage to conquer. That might have been all boasting; still I know they are a dastardly race; and if you had known it, and could have raised a great noise, and thrown some heavy missiles among them

from the loft above, you would have put them all to flight."

"Ah, but if they had got in while I lay here insensible from terror, they would have destroyed me," thought Rosalie. But, unwilling to give pain, she withheld the expression of those terrible thoughts.

More words of soothing influence Mark dropped into her ear, until at length her spirits were calmed, and she was enabled to join him in earnest thanksgiving to Heaven for their preservation. He fanned her till she dropped asleep. And then, late as it was, he went and busied himself with many things that remained to be done—putting glass in the windows, cutting up and salting down the nearly fatal quarter of beef, ripping off the head of the barrel of flour, &c.—and doing all so quietly as not to disturb the sleeper.

CHAPTER XXIII.

CABIN-KEEPING.

"There is probation to decree,
Many and long must the trials be;
Thou shalt victoriously endure,
If that brow is true and those eyes are sure."—*Browning.*

A NIGHT'S undisturbed repose restored Rosalie's exhausted nervous energy. The young couple arose early in the morning to begin their first day of house, or rather *cabin*-keeping, for the difference of style requires a difference of term. They had anticipated

toil and privation, and had thought they were prepared to meet them. But it is one thing to think in a general way about work and want, and quite another to feel them in all their irritating and exhausting details; and the first day of housekeeping in the forest log cabin taught them this difference. They had no garden, no cow, no poultry, and there was no market where to procure the necessaries that these should have supplied. Everything that could be bought at the village shops had been provided; yet their first breakfast consisted of coffee without cream or milk, and biscuits without butter. But mutual love, and hope, and trust, sweetened the meal, and even their little privations furnished matters of jest. And when breakfast was over, and Mark was preparing to bid his "little sweetheart," as he called her, farewell for the day, and promising to return by four o'clock, she gaily asked him what he would *like* for dinner, and he replied by ordering a bill of fare, that *might* have been furnished by some famous Eastern or European hotel. Suddenly, in the midst of their merriment, she thought of the wolves and trembled—yet restrained the expression of her fears. But the eye of affection read her thoughts, and Mark hastened to assure her that there was no more to dread—that the cabin was the last place on earth that the same animals would seek again—that they would not come within sight of its smoking chimney. Her trust in his judgment and his truthfulness completely reassured her doubting heart, and set it at perfect rest. And she let him go to his business with a gay, glad smile.

She watched him winding up the little narrow path, and disappearing among the trees, and then she turned

into the house, to wash up the breakfast service and set the room in order. It was a queer day—that first one that she spent alone in her cabin. After arranging her corner cupboard and sweeping her room, and making a few little alterations and improvements in the disposition of her lighter furniture, she unpacked her sewing materials and sat down in the door to needlework. The primeval forest all around her, even up to the house, the blue sky above, and the log cabin, in the door of which she sat, was all that met the eye; the trilling songs of the wood birds, and the ripple-ripple of the trickling spring in the deep dell near, was all that met the ear. And yet she was not lonesome—she loved this solitude—the manifest presence of God filled it, and heart and mind received the holy, the elevating, the joyous influence. The day advanced—the sparkling freshness of the morning mellowed into noon. And then she got up and took a pitcher and went down to the spring, that seemed to have been calling her in its merry voice all the morning. A narrow, steep path down into the dingle led to the spring, and beyond it arose a high hill, heavily wooded, like all the land about there. She filled her pitcher, and returned to the house to take her lonely noontide luncheon. And then, as the meridian sun was pouring its rays in at the door, which you know faced the south, she removed her needlework to the west window, and resumed her sewing. Day waned; nor was she conscious of its waning until the burning sun began to glance in at her through the window where she sat, and oblige her to take her work to the opposite one—smiling at the conceit of being chased from place to place by

Apollo. She sat at the cool east window, until the striking of the clock warned her that it was time to prepare the afternoon meal, which was to comprise "dinner and supper together." She arose, and put away her work. But what was there to be got for dinner, after all? Tea without milk, bread without butter, and salted beef without vegetables. A poor meal certainly to set before an epicurean, such as Mr. Sutherland had been, for of *herself* she never thought.

Suddenly she recollected having seen some wild plum trees growing on the hill beyond the spring, and she knew the fruit should now be ripe, and she thought she would go and get some, to make a pie. No sooner thought than attempted. She seized her bonnet, caught up a little basket, and set out. She hastened down the dingle path, crossed the run, and climbed the hill. She reached its summit, and stopped to breathe, and rest for a moment. The sudden glory of the extended landscape held her spell-bound. On one side of the forest—a boundless ocean of waving greenery—spreading on and on, thousands of miles, for aught she knew, after it was lost under the horizon. On the other side, the vast prairie, with its dotted groves, like oases in desert, and in the distance the river, and the village, and the opposite shore of Missouri Territory. For a few minutes she stood in enchanted admiration; and then, remembering that she had no time to lose, addressed herself to the errand upon which she came, promising herself, after tea, when they should be at leisure, to return with Mark, and view the landscape over by moonlight. The wild plum trees furnished a rich harvest. She had only

to shake the slight and graceful shaft, and a shower of ripe fruit fell around her. She quickly filled her basket; and then, with her girlish love of change, she returned to the house by another way. By this little route through the thicket, she observed, late as it was in the season, a profusion of wild raspberries, of unusual size and richness. She stopped, in pleased surprise, to gather them, and heaped them up on top of the plums, as many as the basket would hold.

Delighted with these woodland treasures—such a delicious addition to her frugal board—she returned to the cabin, and began to prepare their evening meal. Rosalie had not superintended her uncle's Virginia farm-house for two years, to no purpose. She was a skilful little cook. It was not much to prepare a meal twice a day, for two persons; besides, her "good will was to it." And I doubt if, in all the elegance and luxury of her Southern home, she was ever gayer, gladder, *happier*, than when preparing, with her own hands, this first little supper in her log cabin. The meal was soon ready. The damask table linen and the delicate china that adorned the table, and the fair girl that hovered around it, I was about to say, were somewhat out of keeping with the house. But that would not have been true; for there was nothing mean, poor, or squalid, in the surroundings of the log cabin. It had a wild, woodland air—there was as yet nothing to offend the most æsthetic taste. The arrangement of the table was complete—the last things set upon it being the delicate pastry and the cut-glass bowl of raspberries, powdered with sugar. But, there was no cream or butter; and this was Rosalie's sole regret, as she gave a pleased glance at the whole effect,

and then went to each window, and put aside the muslin curtains to let in the evening breeze, and the green woodland prospect. As she turned from the window, she was startled by a thump upon the floor, and the exclamation of—

"*There!* she sent you *these!* And I wonder why you couldn't o' comed arter them yourself!"

And with astonishment Rosalie saw standing in the room a large, fair-complexioned, middle-aged man, clothed in coarse blue linen jacket and trousers, with a waiter's white apron tied before him. He had just thumped on the floor a large basket filled with vegetables. He still held in his hand a tin pail, with a tin pan covered upon the top of it.

"Who are you?" inquired she.

"*Billy.* Here's the butter. Where am I to pour the milk?" said the man, lifting the little pan that contained a pound print, and displaying half a gallon of milk in the pail.

"Who sent these?" asked Rose, in surprise.

"*She!* Can't you empty the milk? I've got to carry the bucket back."

"I am afraid there is some mistake," said Rose, hesitating. "Who did you say sent you?"

"*Her*, I tell you. I can't stand here gablin' all day."

"But, my good friend, there is some error—these things were not sent to me," persisted Rosalie, looking longingly at the hard, sweet-smelling butter, with the dew rising on it.

With no more ado, "Billy" marched up to the corner cupboard, seized a knife, passed it under the print of butter, and deftly turned the print out of the

pan into a plate; next, he took up the pail and poured the milk into a pitcher; finally, he went back and seized his basket, and seeing nothing to receive the vegetables, just turned it upside down and shook them out upon the floor—and potatoes, cucumbers, onions, tomatoes, &c., rolled in every direction. And "Billy" caught up his empty pan and pail and pitched them into the basket, and hitched the latter, with a jerk, upon his arm, and marched out of the door, exclaiming—

"Now, for the futur', mind, you must come arter 'em every day, yourself—if they're worth havin' they're worth comin' for, an' I've got 'nough to do for *her*, 'out trudgin' over here every day for *you*. An' I told her I wan't a-goin' to do it, nuther," &c., &c., &c.

For long after Billy was out of sight in the woods, Rosalie heard the retreating sound of his grumbling. Full of wonder, she set about to collect the fugitive potatoes, tomatoes, &c. She put them under the lower shelf of her cupboard, and drew the short white curtain before them; then she set the pitcher of rich milk and the plate of fresh butter upon the table, much pleased with the unexpected luxury, but more pleased to anticipate the surprise and pleasure of Mark. And all being ready, she took her sewing, and sat in the door to watch for his coming. She heard his footstep before she saw his form; and she closed the door and ran up the woodland path to meet him. And soon their merry voices and silvery laughter echoed through the forest, as they approached the cabin. Rosalie had said nothing of her new luxuries; and when they entered the cabin, and he threw a glance around, and

dropped his eyes upon the table, first of all he caught and kissed Rose again for her affectionate care, and then, by his exclamations and questions, exhibited all the surprise and satisfaction that the most exacting little Rose could have desired. While they supped, Rosalie explained the mystery of the plums and raspberries, and, after relating the visit of Billy, requested an explanation of the other mystery, of the butter, milk, and vegetables, and expressed her fears that, after all, she had no right to them—that they were intended for some one else. Mark reassured her by giving his opinion that they were intended for herself, and no other; and that she would find out, the next day, probably, the kind neighbour who had sent them.

After supper was over and cleared away, and the young pair had rested awhile, and the moon had risen, they crossed the rill and went up the hill to enjoy the fine air and the extended view.

And thus closed their first day at the log cabin.

And the next morning Rosalie found out her kind neighbours.

CHAPTER XXIV.

DOMESTIC ARRANGEMENTS.

"They grow in the world's approving eyes,
In friendship's smile and home's caress:
Collecting all the heart's sweet ties
Into one knot of happiness."—*Moore.*

THE next morning, after breakfast, while sitting alone in her cabin, engaged, as usual, in needlework, Rosalie received a call from her kind neighbour, Mrs. Attridge, whom she found to be the wife of the worthy proprietor of the neighbouring lead-smelting furnace. "Fat, fair, and forty," with a fund of good nature and good humour, in easy circumstances, and with much experience in Western life, this lady proved an invaluable acquisition to Rosalie in the era of her cabin trials. Her frank, gay, and homely manner invited confidence. She pressed upon her young neighbour the freedom of her garden and her dairy, for as long as the latter chose to avail herself of the privilege, or until she should have cows and a garden of her own —telling her that it was the custom of the settlers to accommodate each other in that way, and that she herself, in the first year of her residence here, had been indebted to a neighbour for her milk and vegetables. Talking of vegetables, led to the subject of "Billy," whom Mrs. Attridge laughingly averred to be a vegetable himself, for verdancy. Billy, she said, was a native of Holland, brought over to America in his infancy, and left a destitute orphan, whom her

mother had taken and brought up, but whose peculiarity of disposition and simplicity of character was such as fitted him only for house-work. She said that, on the death of his first mistress, Billy had attached himself to the fortunes of herself and husband, and had accompanied them to the West, and had been their only house servant ever since—cooking, cleaning, washing, and ironing, as well as any woman could.

Rosalie was amused, cheered, and comforted, by Mrs. Attridge's lively conversation and kind sympathy —yet during the lady's visit, a case that had troubled the youthful wife for several days still weighed upon her spirits and cast its gloom over her countenance, and refused to be shaken off.

Mrs. Attridge, with a housekeeper's sympathy and a woman's tact, divined the cause, and with rude but kind promptitude drew the trouble out to light, by suddenly asking—

"What do you intend to do about your *washing*, my dear?—for it is all nonsense to suppose that you could wash."

"It is, indeed," said Rosalie; "and that is just what disturbs me so. I can manage to keep our cabin tidy, and dress our little meals; but I cannot wash—indeed, I cannot. I attempted to do so, but, after having exhausted all my strength, and made myself almost ill, I failed. And when I know that every pioneer housekeeper needs to be competent to the performance of *all* her domestic duties, I feel thoroughly ashamed of my helplessness in some respects. And when I see my husband so patient and cheerful under domestic annoyances that no day-labourer with an efficient

helpmate ever has to suffer—oh! you know I must feel so cruelly disappointed in myself."

Mrs. Attridge made no comment, but looked upon her young neighbour with a considerate, fond, protective expression on her honest countenance. And after a few minutes, Rosalie spoke again—

"Can you advise me what to do, Mrs. Attridge? for I have resolved that, in our present circumstances, my husband shall be put to no expense for these matters."

"Oh! pshaw! you can never do it; and some other plan must be thought of," said the visitor, reflectively.

"Yes, it is real incapacity on my part—a want of the requisite physical strength. I am not constitutionally weak; but the muscles of my arms and chest have never been trained to great or continued exertion, and strengthened by that process—more is the pity! Look at my wrists."

And Rosalie, smilingly, tearfully, held out two delicate, fair, tapering arms. And Mrs. Attridge took and held them affectionately, while she said—

"I know—I know it would be useless and cruel to expect hard work of you; and yet the expense oughtn't to come on *him*, neither, just now. I have been thinking, since I sat here, of an Irish family of the name of Malony, who live in a shanty about a quarter of a mile from this, on my road home. The man works at our furnace, and the woman washes for bachelors. Now, although they are thriving, she and her family are always ragged, because she is as ignorant as a savage of the use of a needle; and, besides, she says she hasn't time to sew. Now," said Mrs.

Attridge, half laughingly, as she arose to depart, "suppose you were to barter work with Judy Malony, and pay her for washing by making up clothing for her children? At any rate, I will call and see Judy on my way home, and send her over to you."

Rosalie cordially thanked her kind friend, and held her hand, and felt unwilling to allow her to depart.

"I shall send Billy over with more fresh milk this evening. And you must not mind his *grumbling*—he grumbles at me and Mr. Attridge all day long sometimes, and won't allow us to touch a thing in the garden till he thinks proper, without a *deal* of grumbling."

Mrs. Attridge, after promising Rosalie to walk over and see her often, and spend whole days whenever it was possible, took leave, and departed.

That evening Mark Sutherland returned home sooner than usual. His countenance was cheerful with good news, and he threw into Rosalie's lap a packet of letters and papers from home—the first that had been received since their separation from their friends.

There was a letter from Colonel Ashley, full of kind wishes, and something more substantial in the shape of a cheque on the St. Louis bank, for his niece. He informed them that he was again alone—that his son, St. Gerald, having lost his election, had, under the disappointment, yielded to the wishes of his wife, and taken her to her Southern home; and that he expected his own eldest daughter,

now a widow, to return and take the direction of his household.

There was also a letter from Valeria to Rose, and one from Lincoln to Mark.

By these letters they learned that Mr. and Mrs. Lauderdale had joined the Ashleys at Cashmere, and remained the guests of Clement Sutherland for a month before proceeding to their own home in Louisiana.

Valeria wrote that the Valley of the Pearl was still the loveliest vale on earth, and Cashmere the brightest gem on its bosom; but that the envied master of this Eden was more sullen, morose, and unhappy than ever—that it was rumoured his affairs were not as prosperous as before—that he had engaged in ruinous speculations—that Mr. St. Gerald Ashley, since losing his election, had lost his good temper and amiability, and sought more consolation from his "generous wine" than from his unloving wife—that all these circumstances weighed heavily upon the health and spirits of the beautiful India, who had changed sadly within the last few months. The kind-hearted but volatile Valeria touched lightly and reluctantly upon these unhappy circumstances, and seemed always divided between her spirit of communicativeness and her scruples of conscience.

Mark Sutherland and Rosalie read with regret, and turned from the sad contemplation with a sense of relief to rest gladly upon the image of Valeria and Lincoln Lauderdale, now happily settled upon their beautiful estate of Fairplains, in Louisiana. Withal this was a happy evening to the young cottagers—a festival of gladness, such as can be fully enjoyed

only by exiles, feasting upon long-desired letters from home.

The next day Rosalie was somewhat surprised to receive a visit from Judy, and very well satisfied to effect with her an arrangement by which Judy was to do all the washing and ironing for Rosalie, who was to repay her by making up frocks and aprons for her children. And so, before the end of the first week of housekeeping, Rosalie's domestic circumstances were providentially arranged in all the order and comfort consistent with log-cabin life.

It would seem a lonely life she led now, yet Rosalie found it not so. The solitude was peopled with her multitudinous rich affections, high purposes, and bright hopes of the future. Through the day she sang at her active household work, or fell into pleasing reverie over her needle. In the afternoon, when Mark returned, they partook of an early supper, rested, and then took a pleasant woodland walk, or occupied the evening hours with a book.

On the first Sabbath Mrs. Attridge called in her carryall to offer the young couple the two vacant seats to church; a favour which, after some little hesitation and reflection, they frankly and gratefully accepted. And, afterwards, Mark Sutherland was much pleased when it fell in the way of his profession to do Mr. Attridge a gratuitous service—a favour which it was rather difficult to make honest Paul Attridge accept, who answered to all Mr. Sutherland's grateful acknowledgments and expostulations,

"That neighbours should be neighbours, but that professional men should be paid for their services."

As passed the week, so passed the autumn, bringing

little change in the circumstances of our young friends. Mr. Sutherland gained admittance to the bar; but as yet his professional duties were confined exclusively to office business, the drawing up of deeds, bonds, mortgages, &c. And this was not profitable. Indeed, many of his best-meaning neighbours strongly advised him to take up government land, and turn his attention to agriculture. But this Rosalie opposed with all her might, encouraging him to be constant to his profession as he was to his wife—"for better for worse, for richer for poorer." She alone, suppressing all complaint and concealing all her personal privations, continued to cheer and strengthen the struggler. She alone had an invincible faith in his future—his future of greatness and wide usefulness.

Autumn waned, and the severe winter of those latitudes approached. Early in December a heavy fall of snow covered the ground two or three feet in depth, rendering the road almost impassable between Wolf's Grove and Shelton, and nearly blockading our friends in their log cabin. It was with the greatest difficulty that Mark Sutherland performed the three miles' journey from his home to his office, and Rosalie was a close prisoner in her house.

The snow lay on the ground several weeks, during which time the hardships and privations of the young couple were so numerous and so great as to determine them to seize the earliest opportunity of removing into town; and Mark accordingly sought a house in Shelton. And having found one vacated by a family about to emigrate to Arkansas, he rented it at once, and availed himself of the first favourable change in the weather to remove to town and take possession of it.

Their removal took place the first of January. A return to the society of her fellow-beings produced a very happy change in the spirit of Rosalie. Patient, cheerful, and hopeful, she had been before; but now, the sight of people about her—all active, lively, energetic, each engaged in the pursuit of some calling, whose object was at once the benefit of his individual self and the community—this gave strong impetus to her enterprise, and suggested many plans of usefulness and improvement.

Considerable and thriving as was the town of Shelton, no newspaper had as yet been published there. Rosalie spoke of this to her husband. Could he not create a sphere of influence and usefulness in that way? Could he not edit an independent newspaper?

It took money to set up a journal, and he had no money, Mark answered.

Could he not interest the small capitalists and business men of the village in this enterprise?

Mark replied, that to edit a paper required time, and that his office business, though not enough to support them comfortably, was quite enough to spoil his leisure for any other employment.

In fact, our friend was in a state of depression and discouragement, from which it required all the faith and hope that was in Rosalie to arouse him. She said that she would help him, both in the law office and with the paper. She begged him to try her—her "good will was to it," and she had more leisure than she could profitably employ at present.

In brief, Rosalie effected her purpose. Mark Sutherland prevailed upon the principal men of the village to unite in establishing a free paper; and, as a natural

result, they appointed Mr. Sutherland the editor. Rosalie rendered efficient though unseen aid. Nor did the enterprising spirit of the girl pause here. There was no good school in Shelton. The want of one was greatly felt. Rosalie proposed to Mark that she should open one. Mark at first opposed the plan—it would be too much for her. But Rosalie found her greatest health of mind and body in her greatest activity and usefulness. The girl's school was established by her single enterprise. And it grew and prospered.

CHAPTER XXV.

CASHMERE.

"You were not meant to struggle from your youth,
To skulk, and creep, and in mean pathways range;
Act with stern truth, large faith, and loving will—
Up and be doing."—*Lowell.*

FOUR years had passed away since Mark Sutherland and Rosalie had taken up their residence in the village of Shelton. In this space of time many changes had passed over the village community and the individuals that composed it. The Territory had been erected into a state—new towns were incorporated—new cities founded—old ones throve. Shelton itself had more than doubled in population and importance. Where there had been but three or four stores, there were now a dozen; where there had been but two

churches, there were now five. A handsome court-house stood on the site of the old log tenement, whence the law, if not justice, had once issued its decisions; an excellent market-place, well attended, added much to the comfort of the citizens; a lyceum—an incipient library and museum, perhaps—lent its attractions to the town; an elegant and capacious hotel replaced the rude, clap-boarded tavern of Colonel Garner. The country around the village had become thickly settled, and many, many improvements, which it were tedious to enumerate, had added to the importance of the place.

Our friends, Mark and Rosalie, had grown up with the village. Their paper, "*The True Freeman*," and their school, had both greatly prospered. But no one in the world, except Mark himself, knew how much of this prosperity was owing to the cheerful hope, the firm faith, the warm zeal, the untiring perseverance of Rosalie. And at times he wondered at the power of that pale, fragile creature—for she was still very delicate and frail.

His professional business had increased very rapidly. He could not have specified any day, or any suit, from which his success had taken its impetus—all had been so gradual, so purely the result of application and perseverance, rather than of accident or fortune. He felt that here too there was an outward influence, an external power, to which he owed much, very much, of his persistent energy—a power living by his side, that continually threw itself with all its ardour and force into his purposes—into his soul—warming and strengthening him for effort, for endurance.

His success was wonderful. He was already the most popular, the busiest, as he was also considered the most able lawyer in the West. Though but twenty-five years of age, he was no longer only by courtesy "Judge"—he was the presiding Judge of the court, by the appointment of the Executive. He had been elected to the State Senate; he had been named as a candidate for Governor. And he felt and knew that from the quiet, fair, and fragile being at his side, he drew continual strength, and light, and warmth; that, in addition to his own, he absorbed *her* life—her life, that she gave freely to her love. Her form was frailer, her face wanner, but more beautiful, more impressive than ever—for her eyes were brilliant and eloquent with enthusiasm, and her lips, "touched with fire."

"Not only for you—not only for you—but for *humanity*, dearest Mark, I wish you to attain power and place. You will attain them, and——*I shall not die till then!*" she would mentally add.

At the end of the fourth year of their residence in Shelton, Rosalie having attained her majority, it became necessary for Mark Sutherland to go to Mississippi—to Cashmere—on the part of his wife, for the purpose of making a final settlement with her guardian, Clement Sutherland, and taking possession of her splendid fortune. He wished very much that Rosalie should accompany him to the South; but as the necessity of her personal attendance might be dispensed with, and as at home the interests of their household, their school, and the paper, seemed to require the presence of one of them, it was decided

that Mark Sutherland should depart on his journey alone.

It was on a cool, pleasant day of September that Judge Sutherland set out on his journey for the South. Rosalie had accompanied him on board the boat, to remain as long as she might before the steamer should leave the wharf. It was their first separation since their marriage, and upon that account alone, perhaps, they felt it the more sensibly; and as the boat was getting up her steam, Mark Sutherland blessed and dismissed his wife. He felt—how wan, how fragile, how spritual was her appearance; he almost felt that at any moment she might be wafted from his possession, from his sight, for ever. The idea transfixed him with a sharp agony, but only for a little while.

The boat was on her way, and his thoughts turned from her he was leaving behind to those he was hastening to meet. This way, too, was full of anxiety. Nearly a year had passed since he had heard from any of his friends in Mississippi. Although he had written to his mother regularly, he had received no letter from her for several months, and the vague reports from Silentshades were not satisfactory. Six weeks had intervened since his wife had attained her majority, and they had advised Mr. Clement Sutherland to be prepared to give an account of and yield up the property left in his care for so many years; yet no answer had been vouchsafed. Rumour also spoke of Clement Sutherland as a suspected, if not a ruined man. Full of anxiety as to the truth of these injurious rumours and the causes of this ominous silence, Mark Sutherland paced the deck of the steamer as it pursued its course down the river.

It was on the afternoon of the sixth day of his voyage, that the boat stopped at the wharf of the small hamlet of C——, and Mark Sutherland debarked, and hired a horse to take him to Cashmere. He left his portmanteau in the care of the landlord of the little tavern, and set out on his ride. Leaving the low banks of the river to the westward behind him, he rode on towards the interior of the State, ascended a line of hills, and descending the other side, entered once more the "Beautiful Valley of the Pearl." Here then he stood once more upon the scene of his youth's tragedy! With the profoundest interest he looked around. But all was, or seemed to be, changed! Had it really ever been so beautiful as it had once seemed to him, and had age and decay passed over it? Or had its beauty been only the glamour thrown over the scene by youth, and love, and hope? It might have been his changed and purified vision; for much of imagination, enthusiasm, ideality, had passed away with the morning of Mark's life, even as the silvery mist of sunrise passes away before the full, broad day.

It might have been the waning season, for it was now late in a dry and burning September; but the beauty and glory had departed from the vale. The luxuriant green freshness of summer had departed, and the brilliant and gorgeous magnificence of autumn had not come. All the vegetation—forests, and shrubberies, and grasses—was dry and parched in the sun, and the very earth beneath seemed *calcined* by the dry and burning heat. The springs, ponds, and watercourses were low, muddy, and nearly exhausted; and over all the sun-burned, feverish earth, hung a still,

coppery, parching sky. You scarcely could tell which was driest and hottest—the burning sky above, or the burning earth below.

It was, as an old field negro said, "like an oven-lid on an oven." The Pearl itself was now a narrow, shrunken, sluggish stream, creeping between high banks of red and pulverized earth, that was always sliding in and discolouring and thickening the stream of water.

Mark Sutherland rode down to the edge of the river, to the ferry house—once a neat and well-kept little building, now fallen into neglect and dilapidation.

The white-haired negro ferryman was a servant of Clement Sutherland's, and an old acquaintance of Mark's. He met his "young master" with a sort of subdued surprise and pleasure, and to his question as to whether they were all well at Cashmere, answered with a sigh that they were just as well as usual.

Mark asked no other questions, and in perfect silence the old man put his passenger over to the Cashmere side.

Here had once been a well-kept wharf, but now it was much worn and out of repair. Under the shade of a group of elms on the right had once stood a pretty boat-house, in the form of a Chinese Pagoda; it was now a heap of ruins. There had once been a little fleet of boats moored under its shadow; there remained now one large, dirty skiff, half-full of mud and water, and floating idly on the turbid stream; and another smaller skiff, high and dry upon the beach, with its timbers shrunken apart, bleaching in the sun.

As Mark rode on through the grounds towards the

house, he noticed further signs of approaching desolation. Fences were broken or down, and out-buildings were dilapidated or unroofed. Passing through the orchard, he saw the trees untrimmed; some broken down with their loads of over-ripe fruit, some blighted —a prey to vermin—and some dying or dead, and wrapped in shrouds of cobwebs. Entering the vineyard, he observed the trellis-work broken and falling, the vines trailing on the ground, and the ripe and luscious fruit rotting on its stems. He paused near the garden on his right, and a glance showed him that favourite resort of his youth, once the perfection of order and beauty, now a wilderness where thousands of the most lovely flowers and most noxious weeds dried and decayed together under the burning sun of September. There the deadly nightshade grew ranker than the rose which it crowded out of life; and the poison oak, whose contact is death, twined in and out among the tendrils of the honeysuckle and the clematis.

Everywhere! everywhere! all things betokened indifference and neglect, and prophesied of ruin and despair. While occupied with wondering what could have been the cause of this great and grievous change, Mark Sutherland perceived the approach of an old negro, who touched his hat in respectful salutation, and followed him to the foot of the Rose Terrace, where he stood in readiness to take the horse. Mark dismounted, and threw the reins to the groom, whom he now recognized for an old acquaintance. He held out his hand and spoke kindly to the old man, inquiring after his wife and children.

"All well as can be 'spected—Marse Mark! Ah,

chile! things is changed since you was here—'deed dey is, honey. Tree year han' runnin' ole marse crap fail—'fore my blessed Hebbenly Master, dey did, honey—tree year han' runnin'. 'Deed, den, when we-dem had fuss-rate crap, come de tornado, an' ruin eberyting; and nothin' eber been fix up right since. An' 'pears like nothin' eber gone right since. Den ole marse he went to speculatin', and loss heap o' money—leastways so dey do say. Den arter a bit come de sheriff, executionizin' down on top o' we-dem poor coloured people, as hadden nothin' 'tal to do wid it—an' carries away all de best of us—all my poor dear gals an' boys, as I hoped to spen' my ole days wid, an' good many oders. And since dat, seem like we-dem aint had no heart to tend to nothin'—a-pinin' arter our poor children—it kinder takes all the strength out'n us."

With a deep sigh, Mark Sutherland turned from the poor old man, and went up the stone steps that led to the Rose Terrace, that was also a neglected wilderness—but a wilderness of roses, and therefore still beautiful. Unannounced, he went up into the piazza; and before he could retreat, in an instant he saw and heard the following:—A man—or perhaps I should be expected to say, a gentleman—of very bloated and slothful appearance, was lazily reclining upon a bench, with his feet on the top of the balustrades, and with his right arm around the waist of a pretty, frightened quadroon girl, who seemed from the fan she still held, to have been engaged in keeping the flies off from him while he slept. She was now gently and fearfully struggling to free herself from his clasp, and saying, in hushed, frightened tones—

"O! if you please, sir, don't! Consider. Indeed it isn't right. What would my dear mistress say?"

"Mistress! my pretty Oriole! I wish she may say anything! Let her! You *shall* kiss me!"

"O master! O sir!"

At this moment Mark Sutherland had entered, advanced, and bowed very coldly, saying—"Mr. St. Gerald Ashley, if I remember right?"

The ruin of St. Gerald Ashley arose to his feet, and answered, with something of his former ease and self-possession,

"Yes, sir. Mr. Sutherland, you are welcome to Cashmere again. Walk in; or would you prefer to sit down in the cool air here for a few moments? The house is very warm. Girl, go and let you mistress know that Mr. Sutherland has arrived."

He added this command in a tone of authority, in strong contrast of his tone of wooing of a moment since.

Oriole, with her eyes filled with tears, and her face dyed with blushes, went gladly to obey.

Mr. Ashley then conducted his guest into the house.

In a few minutes Oriole returned. Her mistress was too indisposed to appear; Mr. Sutherland would please to excuse her.

Within half an hour a servant, summoned for the purpose, showed Mr. Sutherland to his room, and supplied him with articles necessary to the bath and toilet.

After refreshing himself, Mark rang the bell, and requested to know if Mr. Clement Sutherland was in the house, and when he could see him.

He was answered, that Mr. Sutherland had ridden

to the county town, and would not return before the next morning.

And soon after he was summoned to the supper-table. No one was present at the board beside Mr. Ashley and Mark Sutherland, except Oriole, who stood at the head of the table, and poured out the coffee. With profound and melancholy interest Mark Sutherland watched this girl. She had been a pretty child, and now had ripened into a most beautiful woman. A slight and elegant form, well rounded and tapering, pliant and graceful as a willow, oval face of the purest olive, warming into pomegranate bloom upon the cheeks and lips; large, dark-grey, passionate eyes, fringed with long black lashes, "sweet low brow," shaded with soft, black, silky ringlets, a countenance full of slumbrous passion and emotion, with little strength of spirit or of intellect. These formed the complete and matchless beauty of the maiden, and Mark Sutherland noticed—he could not help but notice, his interest was so painfully excited—the glances with which Mr. Ashley followed the gracefully-moving form of Oriole.

Mark Sutherland wished to inquire after the health and welfare of his mother, with whom he had made several attempts to open a correspondence, but from whom he had not heard for nearly four years; but an undefinable reluctance withheld him from naming the subject to the degenerate man before him. Mr. Ashley ordered more wine, and pressed it upon his companion; but Mark Sutherland, habitually abstemious, suffered his glass to be filled once, and then excused himself; and Mr. Ashley filled and quaffed glass after glass, momentarily more and more garrulous, noisy,

and familiar with Oriole—calling her to his side, drawing her towards him, pinching her cheek and pulling her ears with maudlin freedom; while the poor girl, blushing with shame and confusion, and weeping with grief and terror, sought in vain to escape.

Mark Sutherland, deeply offended with the scene, would gladly have withdrawn, but that he felt his presence to be some protection to the poor girl; he would gladly have interfered for her succour, but that he knew such interference, far from saving her, would hurry on her destruction. It is hard to be wise and prudent when the blood is boiling; and it is uncertain how long he would have remained so, had not a bell sounded in a distant part of the house, and Oriole, taking advantage of the circumstance, exclaimed, "It is my mistress," and made her escape.

Mr. Ashley poured out and quaffed glass after glass of wine, until his ranting mood was merging into a stupid one; and Mark Sutherland seized the first opportunity to rise and leave the table, and pass into the drawing-room.

That elegant drawing-room which you may recollect communicated with Miss Sutherland's beautiful boudoir—how changed since he saw it last! Desolation was creeping even into the sanctuary of the house. He had scarcely time to note this by the sickly light of the moon through the open shutters, when a loud, familiar voice in the hall arrested his attention—

"Where is he? In the drawing-room? And no light there? Get a candle, directly, you scoundrel! and light me in there! I shall break my shins

over these empty baskets and upset stools—do you hear?"

And soon after entered a slovenly man-servant bringing a guttering tallow candle, stuck in a mildewed silver candlestick, which he sat upon a dusty and spotted marble pier-table. He was followed closely by Mr. Billy Bolling, who, with outstretched arms, and almost shouting his welcome, ran to Mark, and clasped him around the body, exclaiming, sobbingly—

"My dear—dear—bo-oy! I'm so glad to see you! And how are you? And how did you leave little Rose? And when did you get here? And nobody to welcome you, but that brandy-swilling beast in there!——Begone, you black villain, you! Who gave *you* leave to stand there eavesdropping, eh?—— That's a field nigger, Mark! Every decent house servant, man and maid, that we had in the world, has fallen under the hammer long ago—all, except Oriole, whom that fellow yonder bought in for his own purposes. Ah! Mark, times are changed, my boy, since you were here! Heigh-ho! '*Sic transit gloria mundi*,'" said Mr. Bolling, sinking into a threadbare velvet chair, and wiping his rosy face—as fat, fair, and rosy as ever.

"*You* are not changed, uncle, except that you appear to be in even finer health than ever."

"*Me!* Why, I'm dying of mortification and grief! *I am.* I have got an organic disease of the heart. *Yes, of the heart.* The string the most strained the soonest snaps! Heigh-ho!"

"Why, I declare, Uncle Billy, I never in all my

life saw a man in such perfect health. You are fatter and rosier than ever!"

"Fatter and rosier! Lord help your perspicasity! It's—it's *dropsy*, and—and—*fever!* That's what it is—this fat and rosy."

"Reassure yourself, Uncle Billy, and tell me how it fares with all our friends."

"All going to the dogs—all going to the dogs—except them that are going to the demon!"

"Nay, Uncle Billy, I hope not—any more than you are going into a consumption. How are they all at Silentshades? How is my dear mother?"

"Silentshades! Mother! Heigh! didn't you know they had sold Silentshades long ago, and moved to Texas?" exclaimed Uncle Billy, with a look of unbounded astonishment.

"I knew nothing about it. This is the first word I have heard of it! What on earth could have tempted my mother to sell her home and move away from all her friends?"

"What could have tempted her?—what could have tempted her?" repeated Uncle Billy, mockingly, shutting his eyes, pinching his lips, and bobbing up his nose and chin, with petulance and contempt. "What could have tempted her to *marry Doctor Wells, at her age?*—a woman of forty, whose matrimonial feelings should all be quiet? What could have tempted her to do *that?*"

"I suppose my mother was lonesome."

"Oh! lonesome be hanged! Wasn't *I* there—her natural born brother—to keep her company? I don't brag—but you know what company *I am*, nephew."

"Yes," said Mark, suppressing a smile.

"Well, I was there to take care of her, and protect her, and keep her company, and cowhide her niggers —although that last is very laborious exertion, and always put me in a profuse perspiration, and gives me a palpitation of the heart—the thoughtless creatures, to put me to the trouble of fatiguing myself so. And now, if you want to know what *tempted* your mother to sell her home and leave all her friends, I'll just tell you—vanity."

"Vanity!"

"Yes, *vanity*—the wish to be thought generous, and disinterested, and *confiding*," sneered Uncle Billy.

Mark Sutherland reddened.

"My dearest mother was all that in reality, without wishing to be *thought* so!"

"I tell you 'twas *vanity*—*vanity* that tempted her to sell her home—*vanity* that tempted her to marry—*vanity* that tempted her first to listen to a suitor—*a woman of her age!* But I do think women are the most incorrigible—the most provoking—the most hopeless—and of all women, middle-aged widows are the most *desperate* fools!"

"Uncle Billy, I suppose, as an old bachelor, you have a license to rail at women in general, and, as an elder brother, you have liberty to be unjust to your sister. My mother was a handsome woman, in her prime, and it appears to me not unnatural that she should have married. But if you thought otherwise, you should have told her so."

"For what good? A cat *may* release a mouse from its claws; a rattle-snake a charmed bird from its jaws; the grave give up its victim; but never cat held mouse, or snake bird, or grave victim with such

a death-grip as a middle-aged widow holds her last lover!"

"Just now you told me that Dr. Wells tempted my mother into this marriage—now, you lay the responsibility upon *her*. That is like you, old, impartial justice, Mr. 'Bothsides.'"

"All true. They tempted each other—she, him, with her handsome property! he, her, with his handsome person! He was bent on having her plantation! —she, on having him. And so they soldered an engagement that Satan himself, with his sledge hammer, could not have shivered. I'll tell you all about it, Mark! I kept a sharp look-out on that chap when he first came prowling about Silentshades. I was tempted to shoot him by mistake, for a catamount. But *I* twigged him! Very little of that palavering courtship, that *I* didn't hear! Sure as ever they'd be on the piazza, *I'd* be in the parlour under the window, listening."

"But what did you think of yourself, Mr. Bolling, for your eavesdropping?"

"Thought I was doing my duty by my sister, to circumvent a gay deceiver!"

Mark frowned.

"Oh, now you don't know how old pill-box and blister-plaster could court! You should have heard him talk about that 'regal brow'—'that, *that* face!' (as if there was no word good enough to describe it)—and 'those holy eyes'—and 'my darling, *oh*, my darling'—and 'my lovely Helen'—and 'it is too much, *too* much to crave of Heaven' (her love you know he meant)—and 'oh, my dearest'—and 'this little hand' —and all the rest of the lying balderdash, which I

suppose was mighty sweet to a woman who had not heard such words for twenty years."

"And how do you know it was not perfectly sincere?" exclaimed Mark, indignantly rising and walking away.

"What, at forty?" coolly inquired Uncle Billy, getting up and walking about, and fanning himself, and sitting down again.

But Mr. Sutherland was much too deeply interested in his mother's fate to keep silence. He returned, and resumed his seat, and inquired—

"Has my mother's marriage turned out happy?"

"Don't know—can't say, I'm sure!"

"You have not told me yet why she sold her home."

"Dr. Wells tempted her to do it for his sake. This was the way of it: Lord bless your soul, he was too old and cunning to stop courting her after the honeymoon, or at least until he had got his hands on the property; on the contrary, they sat on the bench of the piazza against the parlour window blinds, and *courted* more than ever! And I laid on the lounge under the same window in the parlour, and *listened* more than ever. And then he cooed to her, and called her 'My boon,' 'My blessing,' and 'My bride;' and told her what a noble woman she was—how full of sensibility, benevolence, and disinterestedness—how full of honour, truth, and courage."

"Well, sir, it was truth! I can easily understand how much truth should have burst impulsively from the lips of any one intimately associated with my dear mother!" exclaimed Mark, impatiently.

Uncle Billy shut his eyes, and bobbed up his chin contemptuously, and then resumed:

"Truth, was it? Well, you shall hear the rest of the truth. By-and-by he began to take the tone of a wise, affectionate guide and husband—which I have always noticed is very charming to good women, especially when it is mixed up with a little appreciative admiration—and he told her again what a high-principled, noble woman she was, and how she had only to get rid of *one* foible—*one* little weakness—and she would be a *glorious* woman—a perfect woman! And she pressed to know what it was, and she was willing to get rid of *any* fault he disapproved. 'Oh,' he told her, 'it was a want of *trustfulness*—a want of that *confiding spirit so beautiful in woman*—it was no fault; only but for that one small foible she would be such a glorious woman!' Well, Mark, to convince him that she could exercise a confiding spirit, and so become 'a glorious woman' all out, she gives him the full possession and perfect control of all her property, real and personal; and the upshot of it all is, that Dr. Wells has sold Silentshades, and they have emigrated to Texas!"

"Was my mother willing to go?"

"I don't know, Mark. After parting with Silentshades, they remained here at Cashmere about three months before getting off to Texas; and I thought in that three months your mother altered more than any one I had ever seen."

"Poor, dear mother!"

"There was another thing that gave her trouble. The Doctor certainly *did* neglect her; and then he took a great fancy to purchase a beautiful maid-ser-

vant from Clement Sutherland—I dare say you remember the girl—she was Mrs. Ashley's own maid, Oriole."

"Yes, I know"—

"Mrs. Ashley—India—wished to part with her, too; and I dare say the sale would have been effected, only there was an execution, and Oriole, with half a dozen of the likeliest of the house servants, both men and maids, were seized, and put up at auction. Well, when Oriole was placed upon the block, there was pretty high bidding, I assure you. The three principal bidders were a New Orleans trader—who seemed determined to have the girl at any price—and Dr. Wells, and Mr. Ashley. But Dr. Wells and Mr. Ashley outbid the trader, and had the field all to themselves; and the contest ran very high between them. I wish you could have seen those two men bidding against each other for that girl! They became excited—angry—their eyes grew blood-shot—they glanced at each other like tigers—their glances flashed fire! They ran the price up to a ridiculous pitch. Finally, Dr. Wells, frowning, sat down. Mr. Ashley was the purchaser. 'Thank Heaven,' said your mother, when she heard the issue. Mrs. Ashley curled her lip in proud silence!"

Mark Sutherland dropped his head upon his hands, and groaned. A pause ensued, which after some time was broken by Mr. Sutherland.

"You mentioned an execution on the premises—is it possible my uncle was in debt beyond his means of cash payment?"

"Umph! I don't think any one in the State would consider it worth while to ask the question *now*."

"I do not understand how his colossal fortune could have so sunken."

"Ah, well! now I'll tell you his fortune was not so colossal after all. To be sure, he owned several thousand acres of land; but reflect that nine-tenths of that was pine barrens and cypress swamps, producing nothing and costing considerable in taxes; and he owned several hundred negroes; but remember that one-third of them were old people, and one-third of them children, who had to be supported out of the labour of the others; and he owned this very magnificent seat of Cashmere; but consider how much of his capital was invested in the building, laying out and adorning of this house and grounds, and how much in debt it left him, and you will come to a fairer conclusion in your estimate of your uncle's fortune. And then this great commercial crash, that has ruined so many people, has affected him deeply. He lost one hundred thousand dollars by the villany of Claxton & Co., manufacturers, and nearly as much more by the failure of Fleece and Brother, importers, Liverpool. And what was worse than all, he made a desperate attempt to retrieve his fortunes by speculation, and failed, with a stupendous loss. It was like a gambler's last stake, and he lost it—and now he is ready to blow his own brains out! Lord grant that your wife's fortune may be safe, Mark, which I doubt."

"Oh! certainly; I have not the slightest misgiving of it. It was real estate, and could not have been staked in any way, you know."

Mr. Bolling shook his head.

Unheedful of that wise gesture, Mr. Sutherland asked, "And how does my cousin India bear this?"

"I don't know—I don't think she cares about it. Mark, perhaps I oughtn't to tell you, but I don't think she cares for *anything*, or has ever cared for anything, since you and she broke off, nearly seven years ago. She never cared a cent for the man she married"—

"Hush! you must not say that!"

"But I *will* say it, because it's the solemn truth. She never cared a sous, cent, marquee, for him, though he loved the very ground she walked on. If ever you saw a man infatuated with a woman, St. Gerald was with India; his eyes followed her fondly wherever she moved. Yes, a year after they were married, I saw him slily take up a glove of hers, and pet it, and talk to it, and kiss it, and put it in his bosom, as if it had been a live thing—the consummate idiot! And the same day I saw him strike her down before him with a blow!"

Mark Sutherland started to his feet, and gazed wildly at the speaker, who reiterated—

"*Yes*, I *did;* I saw that with my eyes!"

"And stood by, and permitted a man to strike a woman!"

"I never interfere between man and wife. Besides, what business had she to deceive and marry him, while she loved another—and to meet his attentions with aversion—and finally to be found sobbing hysterically over a lock of black hair, when *his* was brown? No, if he had killed her on the spot, I should have been sorry for—*him.* He loved her truly and well. She loathed him. I have seen her shudder all over, if he did but press her hand, or stroke her dainty curls. He felt her repulsion; it drove him

mad! To sum up all, Mark, as I said before, a curse is on the place and on the people; they are all going to the dogs, who are not going to the d——l! But now, tell me something about yourself. You are a Judge of the Court, I hear?"

"I have that honour."

"Well, I always said you'd turn out well! d——d if I didn't! I shall live to see you Chief Justice of the Supreme Court yet! And hark you, nephew; *I intend to go home and live with you.* I feel it my duty to encourage you. I'll stick to you, Mark. I don't care what Clement Sutherland and the rest say. I'll stick to you, my boy. You shall never have it to say that your old uncle fell away from you. But now, tell me, how is your little wife? *Well*, I know, else you would not be here, eh?"

"Rosalie is well, but not strong."

"Never was, poor little thing. And how are the little children, and how many of them are there, and are they girls or boys, or both, and what are their names?"

"We have no children."

"What! lost them all? Well, poor little things, they are better off."

"We never had any children."

"Oh-h-h! Whew-w-w!" whistled Mr. Bolling, rather disconcerted; then resuming, he said—"well, neither have the Ashleys. That's strange! What the d——l's that hubbub in the dining-room? Ugh! It's the niggers toting that animal up to bed! *He*, who seven years ago was called the brightest rising star on the political horizon! Now look at him! That

is India's fault! What tremendous power women have for *evil!*"

"And for *good!*" said Mark Sutherland, as his thoughts flew to his guardian angel, Rosalie.

Wearied with his journey, and longing for the solitude that would leave him free to reflect upon all that he had just heard, Mark Sutherland expressed a wish to retire. Mr. Bolling rang for the night lamps, and they parted for the night.

CHAPTER XXVI.

INDIA.

"How changed since last her speaking eye
Glanced gladness round the glittering room,
Where high-born men were proud to wait—
Where beauty watched to imitate
Her gentle voice and lovely mien—
And gather from her air and gate
The graces of its queen!"—*Byron.*

EARLY the next morning Mark Sutherland descended to the drawing-room. No one was there except Oriole, who had just stepped from her mistress's boudoir, and was crossing the room, on her way to some other part of the house. Once more Mark Sutherland was mournfully affected by the marvellous, the fatal beauty of the poor girl. As she met and was passing him, with eyes cast down, cheeks painfully flushed, and heart beating, as it had too well learned to beat with fear at the look of man, his heart

was moved with deep pity. He had known her from her infancy; he held out his hand, and spoke to her, saying—"How do you do, Oriole? You have not spoken to me since my arrival." But without touching his hand, or even venturing a glance at his face, the maiden dropped a quick courtesy as she passed, and hurried on her errand.

"Poor, hunted, trembling deer!" said Mark: "she cannot even trust a friend. Is it possible to save her?"

His thoughts dwelt with painful but vain intensity upon the hapless girl, and it was many minutes before the old familiar scene around him—suggestive as it was of the most joyous as well as the most painful passages in his past life—could recall him to himself.

He gazed around. The sliding doors and the flowing curtains that divided the boudoir from the saloon, were drawn entirely back, revealing the whole apartment. Yes; here was the same saloon, the temple of joyous reunions, and the same boudoir, the shrine of beauty, love, and happiness. The same, yet how changed from all the pristine splendour of the past! Then all was order, beauty, freshness, and enjoyment. Now all was indifference, neglect, decay, and desolation. Even there, in the sacred boudoir of India—the latest sanctuary of elegance and luxury—rust and must, mildew and canker, had crept over all. There the sumptuous hangings of purple and gold, that made the bower seem like some gorgeous oriental sunset scene, were now faded and tarnished—the royal purple turned to a dull, streaked brown and drab—the gold cankered with green verdigris. The cheval mirrors

were specked thickly with mildew, and obscured with fly-stains; the marble tables stained and smirched; and, for the fragrance of fresh flowers, a close, damp, stifling smell of must pervaded the apartment. All was cheerless, hopeless, desolate.

His melancholy thoughts were interrupted by the entrance of another figure. It was India. And prepared as he had been to meet a great change in the "Pearl of Pearl River," he scarcely recognised her. The superficial is ever the first to strike us. He noticed that the gorgeous and flowing drapery which had once graced her form, was now replaced by a plain black dress. The rich, warm, olive bloom of her complexion had given place to the paleness of ivory. Naught remained of her glorious beauty but the luxuriant amber-hued ringlets and the large, dark, mournful, soul-thrilling eyes. More of *real* self-possession she exhibited now than she had ever shown in former times. She advanced towards Mark, holding out her hand, and welcomed him with these words:

"I am happy to see you again at Cashmere—after so many years—my dear cousin—why could we not be friends?"

Her voice faltered slightly; and when she paused, Mr. Sutherland cordially grasped her outstretched hands, and said, while he pressed them—

"We *are* friends, my dearest India; at least, I can speak for myself and for one who loves you not less than I do—my wife Rosalie."

With a spasmodic catch India snatched away her hands; and, quivering through every nerve, sat down, and veiled her face with her hands, and,

"It is a trying world!"—burst from her quivering lips.

Raising his eyebrows in painful surprise, Mark Sutherland gazed earnestly at her for an instant, and then turned away his eyes, waiting reverently for her self-recovery. Soon she looked up, and, faintly smiling, said—

"I have had much, oh! very much, indeed, to try me of late, my cousin. Everything is going to ruin with us—everything, everything."

"I trust not. Your father is embarrassed, but with the advice and assistance of his friends, all, I hope, will be brought to a happy issue."

"Ah, no! but it is not of our desperate affairs I wished to speak. Tell me of your own. You have been successful in life?"

"Yes, I have been successful, thanks, under Divine Providence, to the constant sympathy and co-operation of my faithful Rosalie."

Again India hastily raised her hands, to screen the spasm of pain that traversed her countenance; and—"Why will he stab me with that name?" she thought; but she answered calmly—"Rosalie is an amiable woman; how is she?"

"Well, and very busy."

"And your family?"

"We have no family; we are all the world to each other."

"Tell me how you have got on since I saw you last."

Mr. Sutherland began, and told her the principal circumstances of his life since their last parting—

dwelling frequently upon his Rosalie's hope and faith, and persevering energy.

"And so Rosalie has been the angel of his life," she muttered inaudibly between her white lips.

A pause ensued, which was broken at last by India.

"All is sadly changed here; my father has been very unfortunate, and Mr. Ashley——I cannot comprehend it! I see ruin gathering darkly around us all, without the power—yes, and without the will—to avert it, any more than I could avert an earthquake, whose premonitory jars were shaking us!" she said, in a despairing tone.

Mark Sutherland made no comment. What could he have said to console her that would not have been false? He thought that not so would Rosalie have met misfortune—with inert despair. And then he remembered that much of this impending ruin the beautiful India had drawn upon her own head, and the heads of those who loved her, but whom, alas! she loved not. He felt relieved when, at this point, a summons to the breakfast-room terminated the interview.

At the breakfast-table appeared India, Mark Sutherland, St. Gerald Ashley, and Mr. Bolling. Oriole served tea and coffee from a side-table. Clement Sutherland had not come home. Mr. Ashley's face was bloated, and his eyes blood-shot—the effects of the preceding evening's excess were but too plain. He sat silent and morose, and ate but little. India maintained a cold, severe aspect, never speaking to or looking at him. Mark Sutherland felt himself *de trop* and uncomfortable, but for Uncle Billy, who kept up an incessant monologue, asking a score of questions about the

north-west, and volunteering many comments. Mr. Sutherland was rejoiced when the gloomy meal was over, and earnestly wished that the master of the house might soon return, and his business and his visit be concluded at once. He expressed this wish to Mr. Bolling, who hastened to reply—

"And so do I, nephew! and so do I! For this is the case every day. Each night that fellow goes to bed tipsy, and each morning appears at the breakfast table in a state of bloated torpor! Yes, *Lord knows* do I wish that Clem. Sutherland would come, and we could finish our business and leave; for you know I'm going home with *you*, Mark. I intend to stick to *you*. I admire your principles—always *did—I'm* your man."

The day advanced, and still Clement Sutherland did not make his appearance. The late dinner was served, and passed as gloomily as the breakfast, and still he came not. The house was growing intolerable to Mark, who summoned one of the servants, and inquired where he should be likely to find his master; and was informed that he might be found at the Planters' Rest, where he usually stopped when business took him to the village. Mr. Sutherland then ordered his horse, and, while waiting for him to be saddled and brought to the door, went and took leave of Mr. Bolling, leaving his compliments and adieus to Mrs. Ashley, who had retired to her room to take her afternoon rest. Then he mounted his horse, and took the road to the village, intending, if possible, to have an interview and a settlement with his uncle, and to make his head-quarters at the village inn, as long as he should be obliged to remain.

CHAPTER XXVII.

FORGERY.

"Oh! cursed lust of gold! how for thy sake
The fool throws up his interests in both worlds!
First lost in this—then damned in that to come."—*Blair.*

In the meanwhile, the object of his solicitude, Clement Sutherland, sat in a private parlour of the Planters' Hotel, in the village of C———, *afraid to return home*, with wild thoughts of flight darting through his oppressed, distracted head! A victim to the lust of gold, he had served the devil too well to be deserted of him at the last hour. And now he sat, with his prematurely whitened head bowed upon his cramped and shrivelled hands, bitterly trying to recall the wiles and review the crooked paths by which the fiend had led him.

In youth, his besetting sin had been a reasonable wish of independence, and he called it thrift; and it seemed to justify every kind of parsimony and selfishness. In maturity it became a craving desire for wealth, and he named it prudent foresight, wise provision for the future, and it appeared to excuse every sort of exaction from health, life, and limb, of his labourers, or "uttermost farthing" from his debtors. In midlife it grew an absorbing passion, and he termed it parental devotion, and it seemed to palliate every species of injustice, cruelty, and dishonesty. In his age it reached its full development, as a monomania, which he no longer sought to sanctify by any holy

name, when it led him into *crime*—into the crime of *forgery!*

Some months before, a most promising opportunity offered of making a great speculation by the investment of a considerable sum of money. But how to raise this sum? He had neither cash nor credit; and all his estate in which he had retained more than a life interest, was mortgaged to nearly its full value. There was one means of raising the funds suggested to his mind, but his soul shrank from it. He could anticipate his ward's majority by a few months, and borrow her signature only for a power of attorney and a deed of mortgage—that was all. And the money could be raised on her real estate, and the sum invested, and the profits secured. And then the mortgage could be released and destroyed before the (he hesitated to give the act its proper name, even in his thought) forgery could be discovered and exposed. So the tempter persuaded him.

He had never trained his moral strength by resisting slight temptations; and now that the temptation was very great, he fell before it. Scarcely daring to think on what he was about to do, he left the neighbourhood of Cashmere for two weeks, and on his return, laid before his correspondent, the usurer at C———, a power of attorney and a deed of mortgage, seemingly duly signed, witnessed and attested. Upon these the requisite funds were borrowed, embarked in the speculation, and lost!

And now the dread day of account had come, and he sat overwhelmed, crushed, unable to fly, afraid to go home, yet fitfully and by turns impelled to each course. It was while he sat there, by turns stupified

and distracted, that the door was opened by a waiter, who announced—

"Judge Sutherland!"

And retired, as Mark walked in.

Clement Sutherland started to his feet, pale and wild-looking, and gazed, without speaking, at his nephew.

"Sir, you are ill!" exclaimed the latter, anxiously, stepping up to him.

Muttering some inaudible words between his white lips, the old man sunk down, collapsed, into his chair. Mark hastily stepped to the bell-rope, to ring for wine. But the guilty man, in the confusion of his trouble, misunderstood the intention, and stretching out his trembling, almost palsied arm, bade him "Stop, for Christ's sake!"

Mark returned, with looks of interest.

"I did not mean to—to *wrong* her! God knows I did not!" said the old man, in a quivering tone.

"Wrong whom?" added Mark, regarding him with much surprise and anxiety; "sir, sir, you are really ill, and I must summon some assistance."

"No, no! you are mistaken. Bring no witnesses. It is—it is—a family affair. Now, I suppose, you will have your revenge!" exclaimed Clement Sutherland, with a frightened, chattering smile.

Without more ado, Mark hastened to the door, with the purpose of sending for a physician. But the old man sprang, tottered after him, and clasped him around, staggered back, exclaiming—"You shall not! I'll have no witnesses. Oh! you're a lawyer!"

Mark Sutherland disengaged himself, sat his uncle down in a chair, and stood for a moment undecided how

to proceed—vague suspicions crossing his mind for the first time, as he heard his wild words, and recollected Mr. Bolling's ominous doubts.

"Yes, look!" exclaimed the distracted culprit, who had quite lost his self-possession, "look! and consider what you will do! It will be a fine revenge, for old and new, to cast the white-haired man into a State-prison, won't it? Now, hark ye! No dishonour can crush me that will not touch you! Remember that!"

Mark Sutherland went to a sideboard, poured out a glass of water, and brought it to his uncle, who took it in his trembling hand and quaffed it off, and returned the empty glass, all mechanically, and without a word of acknowledgment. Mark Sutherland put down the glass, and then returned and took his seat beside the guilty man, saying calmly, and with some reserve—

"Now, sir, it were best for all parties concerned, that you should put me in possession of the facts of this case."

"And criminate myself! Ha! that's a lawyer's trick, to lead me into such a folly. But I'm cool, I'm collected, I'm not going to do it."

"Sir, you have already criminated yourself."

"Ha! you wish to trap me into doing so, so that you can take your revenge. It would be a tremendous revenge, would it not?"

"Sir, you know well that no such mean spirit of vengeance will influence my action in this matter."

"Ha! well, it will be because it cannot. You can't prosecute me—you can't appear against me—because you can't disgrace me without dishonouring yourself. It would not do, you think, to have it said that Judge Sutherland's uncle was a felon."

"And why should not 'Judge Sutherland's' uncle, or Judge Anyone's uncle, be called a felon, if he *is* a felon, as well as the poorest man's uncle alive? Is it because the former has more power, more means, more friends, fewer wants, fewer temptations, than the latter? I think not. No, sir! family pride will no more restrain my action, than revenge will impel it. Family considerations, personal pride, never *have* influenced my conduct, and never *will* do so. No, sir; I conform my life to a purer rule of action. In every question there is a right and a wrong. I obey the right. Had I a brother or a son guilty of felony, and it became my duty to bear witness against either, I should do it, though my testimony consigned the culprit to death. No, sir; if we refrain from prosecution, it will be for a reason much holier than pride. It will be from a motive that would also actuate us in sparing the veriest forsaken wretch alive!"

Clement Sutherland had sat with his elbows on the table, and his head bowed in his hands, his grey hair dishevelled, and his thin, withered features whitened and drawn in as by internal agony. But now he bursts forth in a fit of fury, as ungovernable as it was unreasonable and impotent. Mark Sutherland stood quietly by, and let his rage exhaust itself. Then, when the guilty man was calm from prostration, his nephew spoke to him coolly, wisely, kindly—making him understand and feel that his detection was inevitable, unless he put him in possession of all the facts, to prepare him to meet knowingly the exigencies of the case. It was very difficult to influence the wretched man, who, having parted with his own faith, was unable to rest on the good faith of any other. And it was only after

arguing and persuading him all the afternoon and evening, that late at night he won from the guilty man a full account of the circumstances.

"And now, what do you purpose to do?" was his trembling question, when he had confessed all.

"I shall return home to-morrow, and take counsel with Rosalie."

"Take counsel with *her!*" exclaimed the old man, in alarm.

"Be at ease, sir. She has a voice in this matter. Nay, she *has*—it *must* be—it is *her* name that has been used—*her* property that is lost. And if it were not—if it were my own exclusive affair, still I should consult her before taking any important step!"

"*What will become of us?*—of India? My child! my child! that your high head should be bowed with shame!" cried the wretched man, in a voice of anguish.

"Reassure yourself, sir, I beg. I can answer for Rosalie's noble heart. You are safe from all punishment from her. And now let us part at once. You had better return to Cashmere, where your family must be anxiously awaiting you."

"And where will you stay?"

"To-night I shall go on board the steamer Victress, which will leave for the Upper Mississippi to-morrow."

Suddenly the old man lifted up his head, and showed a countenance brightened with hope. Mr. Sutherland stopped to hear what he had to say. He grasped the arm of his nephew, exclaiming—

"Oh! Mark, I have it now. I have found the means by which family honour and Rosalie's fortune

both may be saved. Rosalie need not deny her signature; that will protect me, and save family honour. But the signature was written before she came of age; therefore the deeds are null and void and the usurer cannot foreclose the mortgage, or recover his money. So you see that I can—I mean family honour—can be saved, and Rosalie lose nothing either."

An involuntary expression of scorn and loathing flashed from Mark Sutherland's fine Roman face for a moment; and then, composing himself, he replied, coolly—

"No, sir; if you are saved, it must be at our own proper cost and loss."

And so they parted.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

UNCLE BILLY.

"He's had misfortunes, great and sma',
But aye a soul above them far;
He'll be a credit to us a',
We'll a' be proud o' Willie!"—*Burns.*

MARK SUTHERLAND went on board the Victress, and almost immediately betook himself to the solitude of the forsaken hurricane deck, there to walk, and while the water breeze fanned his fevered brow, to reflect upon the sinfulness, the danger, of an ungoverned lust of gold—upon the crimes to which it often leads, and upon the felony made known to him

that evening. The orgies of a noisy party of card-players in the saloon below occasionally broke upon his silence; and the sweet laughter of young girls, walking on the guards of the ladies' cabin, was borne upwards on the wind. But the hurricane deck was lonely, and there he paced up and down, wrapped in mournful thought, until the arrival of a noisy set, who, weary of the heated saloon, sought the free, fresh air above, and disturbed his solitude. Then he went below, and sought his berth.

Early in the morning he arose from a sleepless couch, to find all the officers and hands on the boat engaged in receiving last freight and passengers, while the engine was getting up her steam to be off. Mark Sutherland finished his morning toilet, and went out upon the guards, just as the boat was beginning to move from the wharf. The usual crowd of idlers, porters, and loafers, stood upon the shore, watching her departure. And Mark Sutherland fixed himself in a favourable position for watching the receding wharf of what might be called his native village, when the figure of a fat man, in white linen jacket and trousers, with his light hair blowing free behind his rosy face, waving a straw hat, came running desperately towards the wharf. The boat arrested her motions, the plank was thrown out, and Uncle Billy followed by a man with his trunk and portmanteau, stepped on board. Panting and blowing, and wiping his face, he hastened up to Mr. Sutherland, exclaiming, "My dear boy! I liked to have missed you! Near as possible! Wouldn't have lost you for the world, my dearest lad! Stick to you as long as I live, Mark, for your dear mother, my sister's sake! Whew!

Whew-ew! what a chase I've had! Only heard this morning, from Clement, that you were going by the Victress! Running ain't good for me. Dangerous!" And so, talking and shaking his nephew's hand, and wiping his own rosy face, and blowing and panting, Mr. Bolling at last sat down, and began to fan himself with his broad-brimmed straw hat.

Mark Sutherland received his relative's demonstrations of attachment as best he might; he welcomed him, and went to the captain's office to see if he could secure a state-room for his enforced travelling companion; and by the time he had successfully accomplished his errand, the passengers were summoned to the breakfast-table, and the boat had cleared the wharf and was well under way up the Mississippi.

It was a slow voyage up the river, and on the afternoon of the twelfth day the steamer arrived at the wharf of Shelton. Mark Sutherland wished, if possible, to get rid of his troublesome travelling companion for a few hours, while he could go home quietly, and have an uninterrupted meeting and talk with his dear Rosalie.

So, leaving all their baggage in the care of the clerk of the boat, Mark drew Uncle Billy's fat arm within his own, and conducted him to Col. Garner's hotel, to a private parlour, containing a comfortable lounge and easy chair. Here he ordered a luncheon of cold ham, fowl, sardines, pickled oysters, and next all the late newspapers the house could muster; and having seen them all arranged upon the table, to which the easy chair was drawn up, and while Uncle Billy stretched his lazy length

upon the lounge, Mr. Sutherland turned to Mr. Bolling, and said—

"And now, Uncle Billy, can you excuse me, and make yourself comfortable, while I run down to Rosalie and prepare her for your arrival?"

"Eh? Yes; all right! Certainly! The child always was fond of me, and it might give her too much of a shock to meet me suddenly, after so long a separation! Very considerate of you, Mark, certainly—very!"

"Is there anything else I can order for you before I go?"

"Eh? No, nothing; I am much obliged to you, nephew."

"Well, if you should think of anything after I am gone, you can ring for it, you know."

"Yes—yes."

"Good afternoon for the present, I will come and fetch you at tea-time."

"Yes; very well, I shall be ready. Hark ye, Mark break my arrival to your wife cautiously, do you hear? Joy kills sometimes."

"I shall be careful not to endanger Rosalie's life," said Mark, smiling as he left the room.

No sooner had the door closed behind his nephew, than, with a sigh of profound satisfaction, Uncle Billy arose and sat down in the easy chair, and drew the table towards him. In addition to everything else on the table, there was a tall, black bottle, which Mr. Bolling took up, uncorked, and put to his nose with a look of delightful anticipation. He sat it down suddenly, with an expression of intense disgust—

"Tomato catsup, by all that is destestable, and I thought it was port wine! Here, waiter!—(where the devil is the bell-rope?) Waiter, I say!"

A man in a linen apron put his head in at the door—

"Did you call, sir?"

"Yes; bring me a bottle of your best port wine."

The man withdrew, and after a while returned with a black bottle of the villanous drugged compound which is sold and bought as the best port wine, and which *bon vivants* like Mr. Bolling imbibe with perfect faith.

We will leave Uncle Billy to the enjoyment of his beloved creature comforts, and follow Mark Sutherland to his "sweet home."

CHAPTER XXIX.

FAILING HEALTH.

"'Tis shadow'd by the tulip tree—'tis mantled by the vine;
The wild plum sheds its yellow fruit from fragrant thickets nigh,
And flowery prairies from the door stretch till they meet the sky."

Bryant.

ON the outskirts of the town, embosomed in a grove of trees, stood Rose Cottage, the pleasant home of the Sutherlands. It was named partly from Rosalie, and partly from her favourite flower—the rose—of which every variety had been collected and cultivated to adorn her house and garden. The house itself was

simple and plain in its structure—just an oblong two-story frame building, painted white, with green Venetian blinds, and having four rooms on each floor, with a wide passage running through the centre from front to back, and with an upper and lower piazza running all around the house.

The grounds were unpretending, too—behind the house a kitchen-garden and young orchard; in front and at the sides a spacious yard, where single great forest trees were left standing, with rural seats fixed under their shade. In that rich and fertile soil the favourite rose flourished luxuriantly. Rose-trees adorned the yard, rose-bushes hedged the parterres, rose-vines shaded the arbours and climbed the pillars of the piazza and gracefully festooned the eaves, and the fragrance of roses filled the air. What gave a tenderer interest to these beautiful roses was, that they were all love-offerings from the young girls and children to their beautiful and beloved teacher.

Mark Sutherland approached this sweet home. Every care and sorrow dropped from his spirit as he opened the little wicket-gate that separated his garden of Eden from the wilderness. He walked on through the shaded yard to the house, and went up to the piazza, and through the front door into the hall, or passage. Here two doors, opposite each other to the right and left, opened—one into their parlour and dining-room, and the other into the school and class-room. He paused a moment, and listened, with a smile, as the low murmur of girls' voices revealed to him that the school was not yet dismissed.

He opened the door and entered.

Surely, there never was a school-room so pleasant

as this, from which the aspect of dullness, weariness, restraint, and irksomeness, was so completely banished, as there certainly never was a teacher so lovely and so beloved. It was a spacious, airy apartment, lighted with many windows, shaded at a little distance by the rose-wreathed pillars and eaves of the piazza. The furniture was of bright cherry, in cheerful contrast to the white walls and floor. Maps and pictures, of rare beauty and appropriateness, decorated the walls, and shells and minerals and mosses adorned the tables.

The young girls and children—some engaged in study, some in pencil-drawing or penmanship, and some in needlework—looked cheery and very much at their ease. They left their seats, and spoke to each other without infringing any rule, but all was done quietly and gracefully, as under the influence of a beloved mistress, whom they obeyed with no forced eye-service, and whom they would not for the world distress or annoy.

And there, at the upper end of the room, on a platform raised but one step above the floor, on a chair, at a table, sat the young schoolmistress—the wife of four years' standing—scarcely turned twenty-one, and with the loveliest and most delicate face and form in the world, yet by the power of her soul's strength and beauty keeping in willing subjection a miscellaneous crowd of girls, of all ages, sizes, and tempers. There she sat, with her sweet, fair face, and pale, golden, curly hair, and white muslin wrapper—looking the fairest girl among them all. When Mark entered, the quiet light of joy dawned in her eyes, and she arose and came softly down to meet him. There was a

subdued gladness in the manner of both, as they clasped hands.

"My dearest Rose, you are so much better than when I went away," said Mark, looking fondly at her, as the bloom deepened on her cheeks.

"I am better—I am *well*," replied Rosalie, smiling round upon her girls, several of whom left their seats, and came fluttering forward to welcome Mr. Sutherland with saucy pleasure. He had a merry jest or a loving word for each affectionate child, but soon sent them gaily back to their places, as the hour of dismissal had come. And Rosalie, accompanied by Mark, went back to her seat, and called the school to order, and gave out and led the evening hymn that closed their exercises.

When the song was finished, and the girls all gone, Mark Sutherland turned to his young wife, and with a smile of joy drew her to his bosom. But in a moment a shade of anxiety clouded his face; and, still clasping her close to his bosom, he asked—

"Rose, what makes your heart throb so violently?"

Rosalie raised her eyes to his face, and he noticed that a sorrowful shade dimmed their lustre for an instant, but vanished before the smile with which she replied—

"I am so glad to see you."

"But your heart knocks so forcibly?"

"Come in the parlour, and let's sit down there and talk—I have so many things to tell you, and to ask you about," said Rosalie, evading his remarks; and gently withdrawing herself, she led the way into the

parlour, and wheeled up an easy chair, and begged him to "sit down and make himself at home."

But, first, he made her recline upon the lounge and rest, while he drew the chair up and sat by her side.

And there she lay, with her sweet, spiritual face, white as her drapery, except where all the colour had concentrated in a circumscribed fiery spot in either cheek. She was breathing short, yet smiling gaily at her own difficulty.

He sat watching her, and trying to feel and to look happy, yet thinking that after all she was not so well as when he had left her—perceiving that he had mistaken fever heat for healthful bloom. He sat, trying to smile and talk cheerfully, yet with a dull, aching prophecy in his heart. It was in vain to stifle the rising anxiety. It found some vent in these words:

"My love, you work too hard; that school is hurting your health?"

"No, dear Mark, believe me, it is not—it keeps me up."

"It exhausts, it prostrates you, my love—indeed, it must be closed—that school *must* be closed!"

By way of nimbly proving how strong she was, she arose to a sitting posture, arranged her hair by running her slender fingers through the ringlets, adjusted her dress, and sat straight up, while she answered—

"Not for the world would I close that school, dear Mark. I have no children, and that school is my field of almost unbounded usefulness. Those girls are my children; and not only must I cultivate their intellects, but in every young, receptive heart I must

sow good seed, that will bring forth fruit long after I am in"——

She paused suddenly, in embarrassment.

"What do you mean, Rosalie?" he asked, in distress.

"Dearest Mark," she said, slightly evading a direct reply, "dearest Mark, a faithful teacher, called to the work, may not abandon her post, indeed; for oh! see how mighty the influence of a teacher may be, and how long it may last—the good principles instilled into a little girl's tender heart do not conclude their work with her alone, but influence her children, and her children's children, and all who come within her sphere and in theirs. Consider how mighty an instrument of good is set in motion by teaching aright one little child, and I faithfully try to teach forty. So, dearest Mark, hinder me not; but while I live, let me sow the good seed, that it may bring forth good fruit when I am—I mean when all this generation shall have passed away."

There was a pause, during which he held her hand fondly, and seemed buried in thought.

"Dearest Mark, you look so careworn—have you had much trouble in settling our business?"

He raised his head, and looked at her sweet, wan face. He could not, for his life, tell anything to distress her then; so he answered that Mr. Clement Sutherland was not yet prepared to give an account of his trust, but that all would be arranged before the close of the month.

Rosalie arose, and putting her hands upon his shoulders, pressed a kiss upon his forehead, and was sliding away.

"Where are you going?" asked Mark, detaining her.

"To order tea, of course," she answered.

Suddenly Mr. Sutherland remembered Uncle Billy.

"Stop, Rosalie," he said, "I have got something to tell you."

And Rosalie sat down again; and Mark, in some painful and ludicrous embarrassment, related his meeting with Mr. Bolling, and the manner in which that impartial, disinterested gentleman had thrust himself upon him for life.

"And where have you left him now?" asked Rosalie.

"At Col. Garner's, enjoying himself. Really, my dearest Rose, I feel very much annoyed that you should be troubled with this old man," said Mark Sutherland, in a tone of vexation.

"Bless your kind heart, dear Mark, he will be no trouble to me. I have not the shadow of an objection to his coming; I think I shall rather like to have him. Uncle Billy always was rather a cheerful object to me—such a neat, clean, fresh, dainty, self-satisfied, delightful old gentleman! We can put him in the other front room up stairs, you know!"

"But to be burdened with him for ever, Rose! Just think of it! And the most provoking part of it is, he thinks he is doing us a mighty benefit!"

"Well! poor, homeless old gentleman! let him think so, if it makes him happy. Never let him feel a sense of obligation, or fancy that we are not delighted to have him! I can speak truly for

myself—I shall be very glad to make the old man contented!"

"Oh, yes; he says you're very fond of him, and begged me not to break his arrival to you too abruptly, lest the sudden joy should be too much for you!"

Rosalie laughed outright. Her silvery laughter was very sweet, from its rarity, and Mark found it charming. He caught her gaily, and kissed her cheek. Oh, that burning cheek! it sobered him directly. He took his hat, and went to fetch Uncle Billy.

CHAPTER XXX.

AN ORIGINAL.

"He seeth only what is fair,
He sippeth only what is sweet;
He will laugh at fate and care,
Leave the chaff and take the wheat."—*Emerson.*

AND Rosalie passed into a large, square, well-ordered kitchen, over which presided another Billy—Mrs. Attridge's ex-servant, and now Rosalie's maid-of-all-work. And the short history of the transfer of his services was this: Mr. and Mrs. Attridge, having no family, grew lonely, and tired of housekeeping in the country. So they broke up, sold their furniture, rented out their place, and came to Shelton, and took rooms at Garner's Hotel.

So Billy was out of a place. A great many house-

keepers would have been glad to hire him. But Billy, like all invaluable geniuses, had a great many eccentricities and difficulties to be got over. He wouldn't live in a row of houses, or in any sort of a house that wasn't a handsome house, in a large space, with trees round it. He wouldn't live in a family that had babies, or *hadn't* cows and a garden. Poultry was also indispensable, and pigs totally inadmissible. And lastly, he wouldn't live —no, not in town or country, neither for love nor money, with anybody who was not good-looking. There—to use Billy's own words—he set his foot down, and no one could move him from that position. And so it fell out that Billy would accept no place in Shelton, but continued hanging on to the skirts of his old master and mistress, at Garner's Hotel.

But one day, it happened that Rosalie, after she had dismissed her afternoon school, stood at her nice white kitchen table kneading bread for supper, when a shadow darkened the door, and the sound of something dumped suddenly down upon the floor, caused her to turn round. There stood Billy, in his pale blue cotton jacket and trousers, and clean linen apron and straw hat, with a great bundle at his back, and a heavy trunk at his feet. Down he dropped the bundle upon the trunk, and heaving a deep sigh of relief, said—

"I'm been looking for you to send arter me to come and live 'long o' you. Why ain't you sent afore this? Don't like to be a-losing so much time."

"Why, Billy, I had no idea you wished to come and live with us," returned Rose, in surprise.

"Well, you might a-known it, then! You always knowed I liked you and him."

"I thought you refused to go out to service?"

"I 'fused all *them there*," said Billy, chucking his thumb contemptuously over his shoulder, pointing in the direction of the village—"think I'm agoin' to live in a bake-oven, like them there red brick houses?"

"But you might have gone to the country."

"Yes, but you know most all on 'em were so ill-looking—I mean the people, and for that matter the houses too—and then they kept pigs, as made an onpleasant fragrance, and childun, as made werry onpleasant noises. And some places, the missus was either ugly in her temper, or her face, or in both, which is dreadful. And in other places the master was always a-interfering with the dinner or the dish-cloths, in a very misbecoming manner. Some on 'em were not nice in their ways; and what 'couragement would it be to me to put on a clean apron every day, with a nice stiff crease ironed down in the middle of it, to sarve people as wa'n't clean themselves? So the long and the short of it is, ma'am, that I'm come to live 'long o' you."

Now, Rosalie was so gentle-hearted that she did not speak her thought, and say—"But we did not send for you, Billy." Yet, nevertheless, Billy guessed it, for he answered as if she had spoken—

"Well, what o' that? Here I *am*. And here's my trunk and bundle. I paid a man twenty-five cents to help me to bring them over. I reckon I can stay, if I 'gree to stay on your own terms," said Billy, betraying piteous anxiety nevertheless.

Gentle and truthful Rosalie hastened to set his fears

at rest. "Indeed, Billy, we shall be delighted to have you. You will be an invaluable acquisition to us. I am only very much surprised that you should have given us the preference."

A bright, glad smile broke over honest Billy's face. "Why, you see, ma'am, I don't care how much work I have to do—I does it cheerful. I don't care how little wages I gets—I takes it—contented. But I ain't got but one life to live on this yeth, and while I do live, I *must* live in a pretty place, long o' pretty people. Anything else smothers of me—it stifles of me—it gives me the—I mean it makes my wittles disagree with me." And, so saying, Billy shouldered his bundle and trunk, and took them up into the loft over the kitchen, as if he had slept there all his life, and knew the way. And then he came down, and took two big buckets to go to the well. And so, without more ado, Billy was inaugurated in his new place and duties. And a most "invaluable acquisition" he really proved. Billy had now been living several months with the Sutherlands.

To return: Rosalie went into the kitchen, to give directions to Billy about the supper. She found him sitting down, stirring the batter for the pancakes. She told him she expected a stranger to tea, and that he must make coffee also, and dress two prairie fowls, and broil some ham. And next she went into her dining-room and set her table, adorning it with her finest damask table-cloth, and best china, and placing upon it her nicest cakes and preserves. She was so engaged when Mr. Sutherland returned, bringing in Uncle Billy.

I cannot do anything like justice to the vociferous

joy with which Mr. Bolling rushed upon his dear niece, as he called Rosalie. She received him with an affectionate welcome.

"I am come to stay with you as long as I possibly can, my dear. Although a man like me has a great many conflicting claims upon his time and presence, of course, nevertheless I intend to stay with you as long as possible."

Rosalie assured him that the longer he stayed the better she should be pleased. And then, as Billy had put supper on the table, she invited him in to that meal. And Mr. Bolling sat down and enjoyed it with as much gusto as if he had not partaken of a heavy luncheon at Garner's. When supper was over, and Mr. Bolling had been invited by Mark to take a stroll around the premises, Billy entered, to clear off the table, and, pointing with his thumb over his shoulder, he asked—

"Who *is* yon fat, puffed-up fellow in the rosy face and white jacket and trousers?"

"He is my husband's uncle, and you must speak of him more respectfully."

"That's 'cordin' as it may be," said Billy, as he moved off under the weight of the laden tea-tray.

Rosalie's benevolent heart was so gratified at having some one else to be good to, and Mark was so pleased to see her satisfaction, that he became quite reconciled to the intruder.

But Billy was not to be mollified. When Mr. Bolling had been domesticated a week in the house, one morning Billy bounced suddenly in upon Rosalie, as she stood arranging the breakfast-table, and asked—

"How long is your uncle-in-law going to stay here?"

"I do not know, Billy; probably all his life."

"Oh! he is! Well, I tell you, one of us two's got to leave!"

"Just as you please, Billy. You know, of course, we can't turn out a guest to gratify you."

"Well, I give you warning—that's all!" and Billy bounced out in high dudgeon. But presently he came back again.

"Look here, ma'am; I don't want to be onreasonable, but just consider what a difference it makes in my washing and ironing. Look here! every day your uncle-in-law puts on a spic span clean suit, all out! every day, clean jacket, clean trousers, clean shirt, clean what-you-call-'ems, and clean cravat, and pocket-handkerchiefs, and clean socks. Now count. There's seven pieces every day, and seven days in the week; now, how much is seven sevens? You're a schollard."

"Forty-nine!"

"Well, there's forty-nine pieces of clothing, to say nothing of four sheets and two bolster slips, and two pillow slips, and fourteen towels, and table napkins, I have extra washing and ironing for him every week. Now I'm going to count, and see how much it all 'mounts to—ninety-two pieces! Ninety-two pieces extra washing and ironing I have to do, all along of your pet uncle-in-law! Now, you know I can't stand that! No reasonable 'oman would want me to stand it!" said Billy, appealingly.

"No, of course not," said Rose, thoughtfully.

"So onreasonable in any uncle-in-law to act so."

"You must excuse our visitor, Billy. He has been used to the convenience of a large plantation laundry."

"Well, I think he ought to staid there."

"We will put out Mr. Bolling's washing."

"And put yourself to an extra 'spense, and not have clothes half done? No, I can't 'pose on you that way, neither. Well, I'll not give warning yet awhile! I'll see how long I can stand it!" And Billy left the room, and took more pains to please his gentle mistress that day than he ever did before.

There was no love lost on Mr. Bolling's side either, and—"Insolent fellow!" and "Is he an idiot?" and "You all spoil that fellow of yours, Mark!" fell often from his lips, and sometimes in honest Billy's hearing. And one day, while the family were all gathered round the dinner-table, Mr. Bolling said to his niece and nephew—"My dear children, I must request you to drop the name of Uncle Billy, and substitute Uncle William, when you address me. There are two of that name in this house, and if you call me Uncle Billy, strangers might confound me in some way with Billy Bumpkin in the kitchen there, which would not be complimentary."

Rosalie afterwards thought that her factotum must have heard these offensive remarks; for the next evening, as she entered the kitchen, to order supper, he approached her respectfully, and said—

"Mrs. Sutherland, ma'am, if you please, ma'am, I would be thankful if you'd be so good as to call me William, which is the name given me by my sponsors in baptism, and not 'Billy,' for fear people might get me jumbled up in their minds along o' that fat, lazy man, in white teeth and linen, which would lose me my good character, and be very onpleasant to my friends."

CHAPTER XXXI.

MAGNANIMITY.

"Though with my high wrongs I am struck to the quick,
Yet with my nobler reason 'gainst my anger
Do I take part. The better action is
In patience than in vengeance."—*Shakspeare.*

MARK SUTHERLAND had been home eight days before he broke to Rosalie the sad news of his uncle's betrayal of his trust, and her own loss of fortune.

Rosalie heard it with sorrow and amazement. She replied by not one word, but dropped her head upon her hands, and remained silent so long that her husband became anxious and alarmed. In truth, it was a most bitter disappointment to the young wife—she had looked forward to coming of age, and coming into possession of her fortune, with so much impatience, with such bright anticipations, not for herself, but for her husband's sake. It would have placed them in so much more favourable circumstances. It would have relaxed the tight strain of office work from the overtasked, weary lawyer, and left him more leisure for the study of the higher and more attractive and more honourable branches of his dry profession. It would have afforded him means and leisure for engaging actively in political life, and never was the country more in need of honest men "to the fore." It would have enabled him to assist largely in the public improvements of the growing city. Nay, what good might they not have done

with the large fortune that was lost? Indeed, it was a sudden, stunning blow to Rosalie; and oh! worse than all, was the thought of him whose guilty hand had dealt that blow. She sat so long overwhelmed by the shock, that her husband—Heaven forgive him!—misunderstood her silence and stillness, and misconstrued her noble heart. He said—

"Rosalie, my love, look up! This loss of fortune, which you take so much to heart, is not inevitable, irrecoverable. Disclaim the signature, expose the forgery"—

She raised her head, and looked up at him, with wonder in her mild, mournful eyes.

"And what then?"

"Your estate cannot then be touched by the forged mortgage."

"And the man who confidingly loaned the money on the mortgage?"

"Will lose forty thousand dollars."

"And Clement Sutherland?"

"May go to the State's prison for ten years."

She suddenly dropped her head upon her hands, and shuddered through all her frame, and remained silent for another while. And then she rose up and threw herself in his arms, and clasped him around the neck, saying—

"We must lose it, dear Mark; we must lose it! Oh! I am so sorry for you!"

"My poor Rose, I knew what your decision would be; I told the wretched man so. But, my dearest, it is proper that I should set the matter before you in its true light. Should you fail to expose the forged mortgage, you will not only lose the sum of forty

thousand dollars, which was raised on your plantation, but, by the foreclosure of the mortgage, and the peremptory sale of the plantation, the property will be sacrificed at about a fourth of its real value, and you will lose all, my poor Rosalie."

"I do suppose so. Well, well; let all go—all, but peace of mind; for, my dearest Mark, could you or I enjoy peace of mind—could we take pleasure in our morning ramble, or our evening fireside—could we take comfort in anything, dearest Mark, if a deliberate deed of ours had consigned a fellow-creature—an old, gray-headed man—to a prison? Oh, never let it be dreamed of, Mark."

"That is a woman's thought! Men would deem it a stern duty to prosecute the criminal."

"And do you?"

"I should so deem it, but for the thought that this is the old man's first offence, under great temptation; that it surely will be his last; that punishment, in his case, would not be reformatory, but ruinous; that no one can be tempted by the impunity of his crime, since no one but ourselves know it."

This was all that was said then. Mr. Bolling's entrance interrupted the conversation; and Billy soon appeared and summoned the party to tea. And though Rosalie presided at her supper-table that evening with a graver face than usual, yet by the next morning she had recovered her self-possession and cheerfulness, and met them all at breakfast with a smile.

CHAPTER XXXII.

RESTITUTION.

"Rouse to some high and holy work of love,
And thou an angel's happiness shalt know;
Shalt bless the earth while in the world above;
The work, begun by thee, shall onward go
In many a branching stream and wider flow."—*Carlos Wilcox.*

A WEEK after this, Mark Sutherland once more left home for a visit to Mississippi, on business. He went to make a final settlement with Clement Sutherland.

The miserable old man had fallen almost into a state of idiotcy. He gave up all the title deeds and various documents relating to Rosalie's estate, but could give little or no information concerning them.

The plantation was sold under the mortgage, and when all was done, and the final accounts cast up, Mark Sutherland found that of all his wife's splendid fortune, but a paltry two thousand dollars was left.

With this, Mark Sutherland prepared to leave the neighbourhood of Cashmere. But the day that he had fixed for his departure was signalized by a catastrophe that delayed his journey for weeks. It was the dreadful death of St. Gerald Ashley, who, during a fit of mania-a-potu, threw himself from a second story window, and, striking his head upon the iron trellise below, was instantly killed.

India was distracted—Clement Sutherland helpless.

And Mark remained at Cashmere to take the direction of the funeral.

Three days from the death, when all was over, Mark Sutherland sought the presence of the widow. He went to her with no tender condolements, but with the words of bitter truth and stern rebuke upon his lips. He found her in her faded and dingy boudoir.

She arose at his entrance, and held out her hand to welcome him, but before his own had touched it, she sank down in her chair, burst into tears, and covered her face with her hands.

He took a seat, and spoke:

"I come to you, Mrs. Ashley, with no vain words of sympathy, which would seem as untrue to your sense as they would *be* upon my lips. I come merely to set before you the stern realities of your position, and, if possible, to awaken you to its duties and responsibilities." He paused a moment, and she lifted up her head and tearful face, saying,

"Speak, Mark! you will not find me haughty now!"

His lips curled, and then he compressed them.

"Your husband is dead! you know too well what fatal power brought down that high, proud nature to dishonour and to death"——

"Speak—ay, speak—and spare not! I deserve it! Most of all, from you!" she exclaimed, in a voice of anguish.

"Yet, India, for the kindred blood in our mutual veins—for the regard I once bore you, and the anxiety I still feel for you—I would point out a way of recovery"——

"Tell me, Mark! tell me! Oh! I know that I have been guilty! but not wantonly guilty, as you think! God knoweth that I have not! *One* mad, impatient act—*one* frantic act—led to all the rest—ruined all my life and his!"

"Yet that act could not have been committed by any but an intensely selfish nature, India. I speak not to indulge in *vain* reproaches, but to recall you to a sense of what you have already caused others to suffer, and to a consciousness of what you owe to others. You cannot now recall the past, but you are very young, and the long future is all yours. Your husband is dead, your father imbecile, and there is no one to take the direction of affairs on this plantation. You must rouse yourself from vain regret and indolent self-indulgence. You were not created to sit still and be waited upon. You must engage in the active duties of life. You must redeem the past by the future. You cannot now bring back St. Gerald Ashley from his dishonoured grave, and restore him to the brilliant and distinguished position from which he fell—but you can do somewhat to save his memory from reproach. He died heavily in debt. You have property of your own. This seat of Cashmere was secured to you on your marriage, leaving your father a life-interest in it. I do not, therefore, mean *this*. But you have other property in your own right—devote it to the liquidation of Ashley's debts. And more; when you estranged him from your bosom, he sought sympathy and affection from a poor girl who lives in the pine forest. I need not tell you the story; doubtless, you know it. If you do not, the theme is, unhappily, so common, that you can easily imagine

it. What I mean to say is this: this poor, fallen girl is unprovided for, desolate, and heart-broken; and what I have to enjoin upon you is, that you seek out that poor victim of St. Gerald's sin, and make such a provision for herself and child as will save her from despair and deeper vice."

"And if I do all this—if I spend all that I have in clearing St. Gerald's memory from debt, and if I take this poor girl and her child under my protection—will you think of me more leniently than you do? Will you restore me your esteem?"

"My thoughts, my esteem, should be no motive with you. I never asked you to do this for *my* sake. I would not ask you to do it for heaven's sake; but simply I enjoin you to do it because it is *right*, whether I ever remember your existence again or not."

"Oh! Mark, I will do it. But you have not learned of Him, that divine, compassionate One, who would not break the bruised reed or quench the smoking flax!"

She raised her eyes tearfully, doubtingly, to his face.

"Is there anything else, Mark?" she asked.

"Yes, India, your people; remember, that if your life should be cut off before you emancipate them, when your soul is in the spiritual world, you will see those whom you have left on earth, doomed, with their children and their children's children, to a bondage, from which you have no longer the power and the privilege to free them. Oh! I think, India, it is a fearful responsibility, it is an awful one, to die and leave them so—to let the power of righting their wrongs pass away from you forever."

"To do all this it would require nearly all my means—it would leave me very poor."

"*Be* poor! *let* all go but peace of mind."

She paused a long time with her head bowed upon her hands. At last she looked up, and stretched her hand out to him, and said—

"Mark, is this all that you require of me?"

"No; your father is imbecile in mind, and no longer capable of directing even his most trivial affairs. You must apply to the court for the necessary authority, and take the control of his estate. I will remain here a few weeks longer to aid you in obtaining it, and in settling up the accounts. You will find many a just debt which nevertheless cannot legally be recovered of him. You must pay them all without flinching, though the settlement should leave you penniless. You must right every wrong that he has done, or others suffered through him."

He had not taken the hand she had held out to him a few minutes before. It had fallen unheeded at her side. Yet now she laid it in his, as she asked:

"And if I do all this that you demand, *then* will you give me back regard?"

He looked disappointed and annoyed, and dropped her hand, as he replied:

"If the fountain be not sweet, how shall the stream be? If the motive be not pure, how shall the act be? India! do not seek to make a trader's bargain with heaven, or even with me! I have not asked you to do this from the fear of any punishment, or the hope of any reward; I have not required it at your hands for God's sake, least of all for mine; I have simply demanded it in the name of the RIGHT! India! there

is a sentiment expressed, a principle laid down, or a prayer made, by one of our poets, which, for sublime simplicity, transcends everything not written in the Holy Scriptures. It is contained in the lines of Pope's Universal Prayer:

> "'What conscience dictates to be done,
> Or warns me not to do—
> *This* teach me more than *hell* to shun,
> *That* more than *heaven* pursue.'

There is no clap-trap there, India; it is a sublime rule! Lay it to heart!"

He had arisen, and was about to leave the room, but seeing her arms crossed upon the table, and her head fallen upon them in an attitude of the most desolate grief, he turned back, and laying his hand kindly upon the bowed head, he said:

"Dear India, I am writing to Rosalie; shall I tell her to come down and remain with you for a few weeks?"

"No, no! not now! I could not bear her presence here; it would bring back the memory of happier days, in too dreadful contrast with these. Not now! It is very dark, life is very dark to me, and I am very weak and miserable!"

"Dearest India! I wish you would let her come to you—would let her lead yon to the only true source of light, and strength, and joy!"

"I cannot! I can *die!*"

"She would teach you to live; she would teach her truth, that 'out of the *heart* are the issues of life'"——

"And of *death!*" said India, in a hollow voice.

Then he could only press her hand, and leave her.

Mark Sutherland remained three weeks longer in the neighbourhood of Cashmere. During his stay he lodged at the village of C., because he found it impossible to remain at Cashmere, where the presence of India, in her grief and desolation, seemed to scorch his very soul like a spiritual fire. He laboured very industriously, and, with the assistance of efficient lawyers and clerks, reduced the chaos of the Cashmere accounts into something like order, and made the way straight for the future course of India and her attorney. At the end of the third week he completed his work, and bade adieu to India and to Cashmere.

And in twelve days he was at home again. He was met near the house by Billy, who, with two baskets upon his arms, was proceeding upon some household errand.

"Well! and so it's you, is it!" observed that functionary, setting down his baskets. "And so you've comed at last!"

"How is your mistress, Billy?" inquired Mr. Sutherland.

"Not bein' of a nigger, hain't got no missus. Ef you means *her*, in yonder, how does you 'spects her to be being, along o' the school and the head-eat-oriels, and the clients? You better go see how she is! Yes, and I can tell you, you better go see arter your paper, *too!* or you won't have any 'scribers left!"

"Why, how so?"

"Humph! how so? Why Mr. Bolling, he took it into his head as he'd write a great head-eat-oriel leader —I could o'done it as well myself ef I'd had anybody to take down my words in writin'—'cause I used to be a *class*-leader, or least way I used to belong to a class. Well, unbeknownest to Mrs. Sutherland, Mr. Bolling

he puts on his spectacles and sits down to write a leader. Lord, it took him a week, and then it took a whole side of the paper to print it! And when it come out—ugh! whew! brikey! my eyes! ef it didn't put the whole town and county into a hubbub. *Every*body was mad, and threatened to stop their paper—the Dimocrats said how you'd turned Whig; and the Whigs said you'd turned Dimocrat; and the Consarvatives said you'd become a revolutioniser and a 'cendiary; and the Free-S'ilers said how you'd betrayed your pairty! If you could get 'lected to a lamp-lighter's place *this* go, *I'm* a Hunker!" said Billy, hitching up his baskets, and trudging off towards the town. Very much disturbed by what he had heard, Mark Sutherland hastened on homeward. That his paper was injured, and his income diminished, were comparatively small matters; that his election was lost, was not a very great one; but that public confidence was shaken, and his influence impaired, was a misfortune. Anathematising Mr. Bolling's both-side-isms, which now seemed to have reached *all*-side-ism, he passed through the green gate leading into his own lawn.

Rosalie, who had seen his approach from afar, came down from the house to meet him. She looked smiling and happy, as she gave him both her hands. Her cheerful confidence raised his hopes. He greeted her fondly, and then drew her arm within his own. And as they walked slowly back to the house—

"Well, Rosalie!" he said, "what about this confounded editorial of Mr. Bolling's? It is not enough, it seems, that he should be a kill-joy in the house and by the fireside, but he must be a mar-plot abroad, and an evil genius to our business!"

Rosalie laughed gaily.

"Oh, it is nothing," she said; "it was just one of Mr. Bothsides' grand, broad, impartial manifestoes. It took our people, both friends and opponents, very much by surprise, perplexed them not a little, and finally made them laugh. No one, for an instant, could have attributed such a leader to you, even if they had not been advised of your absence and exclusive engagement elsewhere. Besides, in to-day's paper the publisher explains that the article was from the pen of a transient contributor. Why do you still look so grave? It is not possible that poor, daft Billy has really alarmed you with his gossip. Psha! even innocents of Billy's mental calibre could scarcely impute the sentiments of that foolish leader to you."

Grave! Well he might look grave; but not upon the subject of leading editorials, public sentiment, popular applause, or popular execration. He wondered now, how such trifles could have discomposed him. There *she* was—the angel of his life—walking by his side, leaning on his arm, looking very smiling and happy, talking cheerily, laughing sweetly; but, oh! that face was so fair and wan—that pearly forehead so greatly developed, so polished from the tension of the skin—those large, shadowy eyes, so deeply luminous —those crimson flushes in the hollow cheek, so intense and fiery—that whole countenance, irradiated with such unearthly, supernal light! Why should he look grave? He answered her question in some trivial way —said he was not grave, or something to that effect, and put on a look and manner of ease and light-heartedness—strangers, alas! to his bosom, from this time forward many a day! He did not now express

any anxiety, or care, or thought about her health! he did not even ask her how she was; for oh! such feelings had suddenly grown too deep, too real, too painful to be spoken. He did not support her steps with his usual tenderness and solicitude. A sort of fierce jealousy and antagonism to disease and death took possession of him—a sort of instinct that, by denying their existence, he might disable their might—a kind of feeling that, by disbelieving Rosalie's weakness, and disallowing her yielding to disease, he might save her from the power of death.

With more refined spiritual insight than he possessed, Rosalie perceived his thoughts and emotions; and, as much as possible, avoided giving him pain. She never betrayed weariness, if the exercise of the greatest fortitude and patience could conceal her sufferings; she never complained, never even alluded to her mortal illness.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

IMMORTALITY.

"Slowly she faded—day by day
Her step grew feebler in our hall,
And fainter at each even fall
Her low voice died away;
Yet on her sweet, pale lips the while
Sat resignation's holy smile.

Calm as a child to slumber soothed,
As if an angel's hand had smoothed
The still, white features into rest—
Silent and cold, without a breath
To stir the drapery on her breast,
She slept, at last, in death."—*Whittier.*

In the political world, the next year, the spirit of party ran very high. A great moral as well as national problem agitated and divided the whole country. Mark Sutherland had been nominated by the Human Rights as their candidate for the United States Senate; he had accepted the nomination, and his friends laboured perseveringly and anxiously for his election. Rosalie, as usual, entered heart and soul into all his toils and anxieties. "And not for ourselves, dearest Mark," she said; "not for our own profit or vainglory—for that were a poor, mean, narrow motive, and a low, selfish aim!—nor for your own personal honour, Mark—though to him who is worthy of it, to him who appreciates and accepts its duties and responsibilities in the right religious spirit, a seat in the American Senate is a great honour—nor even for your future fame, Mark—not from any

or all these motives do I wish and pray and toil for your success—but for the sake of the place and power it will confer upon you of doing good; of speaking appropriate truths before the proper audience; of succouring the oppressed; of defending the right! For this I hope, and trust, and labour, and would, if need were, die!"

And upon another occasion, when he was vexed and harassed, wearied and despondent, and inclined to give up the object as little worthy the labour or the pains, she said to him, sweetly—for her very tone and manner had a soothing, encouraging spell—

"Remember what Mountford says: 'Fame is a great thing for a man; it is silence for him when he wants to speak; it is a platform to preach from, more authoritative than a monarch's throne; it is an affectionate attention from a multitude of hearers.' Win fame, Mark—win the silence that will wait for your voice; the platform more authoritative than the monarch's throne; the reverential attention of multitudes! Only let sounds of words of truth and justice fall upon the silence; principles of righteousness speak from the platform; and the confiding attention of the crowd be rivetted to the glorious right!"

High, inspiring words of holiness like these fell daily from her lips. But Rosalie was dying—dying all the faster because her failing oil of life was consumed so ungrudgingly—her lamp of life shone so brightly, giving light where it was needed. Yes, Rosalie was dying, and her husband did not dream of it. Soothed into rest by her own sweet patience, and by the slowness and beauty of her failure, he did not dream of it! He left her with an increased bur-

den of duties. At the urgent entreaties of his political friends, he went to show himself among the voters of the western counties. He was absent about a month, during which she toiled for "the good cause" faithfully—saying, when her strength was failing, "There will be time enough for rest hereafter; I must 'work while it is yet day, for the night cometh wherein no man can work.'" And so, at the close of her daily school duties, she only left her school desk to seat herself in the editor's vacant chair; and the hours that should have been spent in recreation and rest, and the hours that belonged to sleep, were devoted to the interests of "the paper," and the cause it supported—to writing editorials, to reading and answering letters, examining exchanges, and propitiating or putting down opposition.

Mark Sutherland returned at the end of the month, with the flush of hope upon his cheek, the light of anticipated triumph in his eyes; but both light and colour faded from his face at the sudden sight of Rosalie's brilliant eyes and burning cheeks. Was it strange that he never was struck by her illness, except upon meeting her after an absence? On the contrary, I think it was natural, for a few days accustomed him to her appearance; and her sweet patience, her cheerfulness and hope, mesmerised him into peace and joy. But this time, as he drew her into the house, he said—

"Indeed, Rosalie, you must, you *shall* give up your school. You are not strong enough to continue it! Besides, it is not needful. My election is nearly certain, and then another sphere and other more

graceful, agreeable, and lady-like amusements will await you, dearest."

Rosalie smiled.

"Dear Mark, whenever you make a circuit among our hardy country people, you come back thinking me more fragile than ever, from the contrast."

And so she reassured him—and oh! he was very willing to be reassured—and she continued the charge of her school—anxious for every good principle she could instil into the minds of her young pupils—saying to herself, "These little ones will hereafter be the wives and mothers of law-makers, as all our people are law-makers; they will live in an era when American women will have more influence upon the destinies of the nation than they dream of now. That influence must be for the right; I must sow the good seed, and cultivate it while I live, that, after I die, the germ may grow and flourish, and bring forth much fruit in other lives!"

But the day came at last when her school had to be closed, and the labourer was obliged to rest from her labour. It was during the afternoon session of a certain Friday—a day never to be forgotten by the young girls, who loved their gentle teacher with enthusiastic devotion—in the midst of one of the class-exercises—a little *extempore* lecture on their history lesson—that a sudden failure of strength drew all colour from her face, her head dropped forward on her desk, and she swooned. And after this she did not teach. Her school was opened but once more, and for the last time. It was the day that she received her pupils for the purpose of bidding them farewell. It was quite a cheerful parting on her part, saddened

by no vain repining; on theirs, darkened by no vision of the shadow of death. She made it the occasion of a little festival, that her children's last reminiscences of her might be associated with pleasant thoughts; and yet it was an earnest parting, too, that she sought to sanctify to their good. In taking leave of each dear girl, she laid upon the heart of each a text of Scripture, suited to the individual need, to be remembered for her sake, and acted upon until they should meet again. For instance, Regina's besetting sin was ambition, and with her she left, "What shall it profit a man, if he gain the *whole world* and lose his own *soul?*" and to Augusta, who had a haughty mind, she said, "*Pride* goeth before a fall, and a haughty spirit before destruction;" to Maud, who had a high temper, she whispered, "A *soft answer* turneth away wrath, but grievous words stir up anger;" to little Alice, who was poor and neglected, and inclined—child as she was—to despondency, she said, "Blessed are the *meek*, for they shall inherit the earth;" to Fanny, who was an impetuous, impassioned child of impulse, she said, "He that *ruleth his own spirit* is greater than he who taketh a city." All these the affectionate girls promised to lay to heart, and act upon until they should meet their teacher again. Only Fanny said she hoped their dear teacher would not treat them as Lycurgus did the Spartans, and leave them laws to be obeyed during her absence, and then go away, never to return. A cloud passed over the sunshine of Rosalie's countenance; but after a little hesitation she said, "If I live, dear girls, I will return in the spring." And soon after saying this, she dismissed all the bright-eyed, light-hearted children to their homes.

Rosalie had been directed by her physician to spend the fall and winter in the South. She had an old, standing engagement to spend a few months in Louisiana, at the house of the Lauderdales, with whom she had kept up a regular correspondence. But, previous to embracing this opportunity of benefitting her health by accepting the invitation, Rosalie wrote to her step-mother, telling her frankly of the feeble state of her health and the precarious tenure of her life, and of the order of her physician relative to her removal South; but expressing, at the same time, her dread of the inconvenience and trouble to which her illness and death at their house might possibly subject her host and hostess. There could but one possible answer to such a letter suggest itself to the mind of Rosalie's affectionate step-mother—it was an answer in her own person. Accordingly, in about two weeks from the day that Rosalie mailed her letter to Mrs. Lauderdale, that lady arrived at Shelton, stopping only long enough at the hotel to write a note to Mark Sutherland, requesting him to break the news of her presence to Rosalie, and then come and take her to his wife.

The meeting between Rosalie and her step-mother was most affectionate and tender; but the patience of Rose and the self-possession of Mrs. Lauderdale restrained their mutual agitation. Mrs. Lauderdale had come, in person, to take her step-daughter to Louisiana, that she might nurse and watch over her during the journey. And as soon as she found herself alone with Mark Sutherland, she said—

"And you must let her go at once, dear Mark. She is iller than you think, and the mornings and the evenings are already chill in this bleak clime. Yes, dear

Mark, you must let her go at once; and if you cannot possibly leave your political interests here, you may confidently trust her to me on the journey, for I love her as my own child, and will not leave her, night or day; and you can join us as soon as you get through this bustling and bothersome election."

"No, I will never suffer her to go without me. I will accompany her—attend upon her. I will never leave her again. Let the election go. What is success to me, if I lose her? You do not know all that she has been to me—all that she is to me—Mrs. Lauderdale! I tell you, if she should sink into the grave, earth could not offer me a boon so welcome as the half of that grave!"

A few days after this, the whole party set out for the South, and in a little more than a week arrived at the beautiful home of the Lauderdales.

Lincoln Lauderdale met and received them with hearty cordiality. Upon the very day that Mrs. Lauderdale had left home to go up the river and visit her step-daughter, she had written to Mrs. Wells, and invited her to come to Louisiana to meet her daughter-in-law, and perhaps her son. This was done by the kind-hearted little lady with the purpose of effecting a reconciliation between the long-estranged members of the family. And now, on reaching home again, among the letters upon her boudoir table she found one from Mrs. Wells, saying that the Doctor had gone for an indefinitely long absence to California, and that she should be pleased to accept the invitation of Mrs. Lauderdale, who might expect her about the middle of the month.

"And the day after to-morrow is the sixteenth, so,

Mark, you may daily expect the arrival of your mother," said Mrs. Lauderdale, looking up from the epistle. And then she told them of her invitation.

Upon that very afternoon Mrs. Wells arrived. The meeting between herself and her son took place alone, by her request. It was not known what happened at that interview, except that she sobbed a long time on his shoulder, and that a full reconciliation ensued. To Rosalie her manner was very affectionate.

But Rosalie, from the time of her reaching Fairplains, failed very fast. She now seldom left her easy chair by the western window. It was the pleasantest and most beautiful room in the house that had been assigned the invalid—a room occupying the first floor of a whole wing of the house, and with its east windows looking far out upon the green alluvion that stretched to the sandy beach of the distant gulf, and with its west windows opened upon a beautiful garden, beyond which spread fields reaching out to the dark pine forest that stood stately against the sunset sky. At this sunset window was her favourite afternoon seat; and here, with her friends grouped around her, she smiled and conversed as sweetly, as cheerfully, if more faintly, than ever; or here, with only her husband seated by her side, she would sit with her thin hand in his, looking into his eyes with such infinite, unutterable love and devotion, as though she would transfuse all her mind, and soul, and spirit into his being, to strengthen him for his life's trial and work.

Every mail brought him piles of letters from his political friends and correspondents: but they lay unanswered, unopened, upon his secretary. Some-

times she would inquire about the prospects of the party; he could tell her little, he thought little, he cared little about it; and she would fix her mild eyes in mournful wonder upon him.

Soon the pleasant seat by the sunset window was given up for the couch, and too soon the couch was left for the bed, from which she was never to rise again. Then it was, after her confinement to her bed, that they approached a subject that both had hitherto avoided discussing together—her dissolution. She still spoke to him of the good cause—the cause of justice, truth, and freedom. She implored him to let no individual sorrow draw him away from his labours of love to the whole race of man; rather to consecrate that sorrow to their service. And still she inquired about the prospects of his election to the Senate. She so much wished to see him in the possession of place and power before her death.

"Not alone for your sake, dearest Mark," she still repeated; "not alone for your sake, but for the sake of humanity."

"Oh, dearest Rosalie, why should I wish for success? When you have left me, what motive of action have I on earth?"

"A motive higher than any my life could supply you with—the service of God, the good of man."

And all this time piles of accumulated and accumulating letters from political partisans lay unopened and unanswered, on his forsaken secretary.

At last the day of death came—a clear, beautiful day, that, after the noontide glory, waned without a cloud.

Rosalie lay sleeping on her bed; her pale gold hair,

unconfined by a cap, lay floating on the pillow; her wan face was as white as the linen pillow-case against which it rested; her thin, blue-veined arm, uncovered from the loose muslin sleeve, was white as the counterpane upon which it lay. She slept calmly for a while, and then her bosom was agitated by a slight flutter; it came a second and a third time; and then, with a start and a gasp, she awoke, opened her eyes, and gazed wildly about for an instant; then her glance fell on Mrs. Wells, sitting watching by her bed-side. That lady arose, and, bending affectionately over the invalid, inquired—

"What do you want, dearest? Will you take your composing draught now?"

The eyes of the death-stricken Rosalie softened into self-possession and quietness, and she answered faintly,

"No, mother, not now. Where is Mark?"

"On the piazza, dear."

"Sleeping?"

"No; waiting for his darling to awake."

"Send him to me, mother. I wish to see him alone."

The lady stooped, and pressed a kiss upon the chill brow of the dying girl, and without suspicion went out; and in half a minute Mark stood over Rosalie.

She raised her eyes, a little wild with the life-struggle, to his pale face.

"My hour is come; I am going, dear Mark; I am going! Turn me over on my right side, facing you. Sit down by me, so that I can see you to the last! Hold my hand!"

Agonised with grief, yet by a powerful will controlling his feelings, he raised her light form, and turned her as she desired. And then he wished to call assist-

ance; but with an imploring look and gesture she arrested his purpose, and said,

"Useless, dear Mark! useless all. Oh! sit near me, where I can see you till the last, and so—part in peace sweetly."

She lay upon her right side, with her face towards him, with her fair hair floating back upon the pillow, with her blue eyes raised with unspeakable love to his countenance, with her left hand lying helplessly over the white counterpane.

He sunk down into the chair by her side; he took her chill hand in his own warm one; he gazed upon her dying face. And, as he gazed, a slight spasm agitated her fair throat, quivered over the sweet lips, and gave place to a heavenly smile. She sought to speak, but her words sank in quivering music—her eyes fixed upon his eyes—pouring their last light in streams of unutterable love into his soul—and so they remained, until the heavenly spirit left them dim in death.

And still he sat gazing upon the dead face, holding the cold hand, until a noise in the piazza disturbed him, and words and tones of joy and triumph fell upon his ear—and a familiar voice, asking—"Where is Mark? where is he? I swore to be the first to congratulate him, and I'll do it! I will not be hindered, I tell you!" and in another instant Uncle Billy burst into the room, and, overjoyed, bewildered, *blinded*, rushed upon Mark, who had risen to prevent him, seized both his hands, exclaiming exultingly—

"Judge Sutherland, you are elected, sir! Sir, by an unprecedented vote! Allow me the honour of being the first to pay my respects to our Senator!"

Mark Sutherland grasped his visitor's hand with

overmastering force, and silently pointed to the still pale form upon the bed.

Mr. Bolling drew nigh, in sudden awe and grief, and his heart almost stood still, as he inquired, with hushed tones—

"*Dead?*"

"No!" replied Mark Sutherland, reverently,—"IMMORTAL!"

CHAPTER XXXIV.

"TAKE UP THE BURTHEN OF LIFE AGAIN."

"Blaspheme not thou thy sacred life, nor turn
O'er joys that God hath for a reason lent,
Perchance to try thy spirit and its bent,
Effeminate soul and base! weakly to mourn.

"Art thou already weary of the way—
Thou who hast yet but half the way gone o'er?
Get up and lift thy burthen; lo, before
Thy feet the road goes stretching far away."—*Fanny Kemble.*

OH life! Oh world and worldly honour! how poor and vain, how worthless and worse than worthless, how bitterly mocking do ye seem in the presence of death, the death of the best-beloved! What now to him was his political victory? what the success of his party? the cause of the country? aye, of the world, or of humanity? Nothing, and less than nothing! if that could be. He had called her "immortal"—making what stand he could against

the overwhelming sense of annihilation that had fallen upon him. Alas! alas! he felt now as if nothing were immortal but his own bitter, insupportable grief; as if with her all things had passed from him—leaving only insufferable sorrow. And he lifted up his voice, and wept—"Oh, Rosalie! Rosalie! life of my life!" But let us not intrude upon a grief so sacred.

Pass we by the next few mournful days. Pass we by the funeral, where all who had known the angel in her mortal life, gathered around to gaze once more upon her sweet face, drop a tear to her lovely memory, and go away, haply, wiser, and more loving than they came.

Pass by the time when the news of her departure from this earth reached her distant Western home, and many other homes that felt the blessing of her influence and mourned her loss; and where to this day the memory of Rosalie is still fresh and beautiful, sweet and fragrant—even as that of some fair saint, who lived, and loved, and toiled, and suffered to benefit humanity, to whom she was given; and where the present thought of Rosalie is as that of some bright guardian angel, still blessing from heaven those she loved upon the earth.

Pass to the time when Mr. Sutherland's official duties called him to Washington City. The first vehemence and severity of his sorrow was over—but not the sorrow: it had settled rather into a fixed and silent melancholy, from which no earthly interest was strong enough to arouse him. Even the fine powers of his mind seemed palsied for a time.

He reached Washington, the goal of his young am-

bition; was duly sworn in, and took his appointed seat in the Senate Chamber. But all this passed to him like a dream, or at least like a form in which he had no vital interest. It was well for Mark Sutherland that he was a man of very imposing presence—that his bearing was dignified and commanding, and his fine Roman features, even in the deepened repose, as in a painting, or a marble bust, still expressed a high degree of intellect; as, through that fortuitous accident of physique, taken together with his antecedents, which were not those of a negligent politician—his mental abstraction passed for the pride and reserve of a lofty mind—which it was *not*—rather than for the profound indifference, amounting almost to apathy, of a deeply stricken heart—as it *was*.

Time passed, and the "affairs of the nation" got slowly under way. And the "assembled wisdom" of the commonwealth took up its profoundest problems. Debate after debate arose, and questions in which he had once taken the profoundest interest—but they had now no power to affect or inspire him.

Into society he did not go at all; but left the Capitol only for his boarding-house, and his boarding-house only for a ride or a walk out into the country.

So the session passed, and Mr. Sutherland had failed to distinguish himself, or to do credit to his constituents. He had apparently done no service to himself, his party, humanity or heaven. His best friends were surprised, grieved and disappointed in him.

He returned home; met his constituents with the same apathetic, frozen indifference.

What was the matter?

It was scarcely credible even to himself that the

sorrow that had fallen upon him—a sorrow no heavier apparently than that which falls upon many a man and woman, who nevertheless "take up their burden of life again," and go on—should have so paralyzed his intellect and his will.

Had all his motive power departed with Rosalie? Had she been the secret and the fountain of his mental and moral force? He had often said so and thought so, during her mortal life; and now it seemed to be demonstrated. He once thought of resigning his seat in the Senate, and spoke of his failing health as a reason for doing so; but his personal friends dissuaded him from his half-formed purpose. And about this time Lincoln Lauderdale wrote and invited Mark Sutherland to join him in a trip to England. Mr. Sutherland accepted the invitation.

The friends met by appointment at St. Louis, and travelled in company to New York, and embarked together for Liverpool.

The voyage was made. The summer was spent in travelling through England, Scotland and Ireland.

And in the autumn they returned to the United States, and reached Washington City just before the meeting of Congress.

The trip had been made without much benefit to the health and spirits of Mr. Sutherland. And Mr. Lauderdale, with much uneasiness in regard to the state of his friend, took leave of him in Washington, and departed for the South.

The two Houses of Congress organized, in the course of time, and the nation's business commenced. And again Mr. Sutherland sat a mere silent, handsome figure-head in his seat.

In fact, it required—not travel and change of scene, not the offices of friendship, nor the distinctions of society, but some powerful emotion, something that should sound a trumpet-call to his heart and brain—some mental or moral shock—to rouse that dormant mind to life and action.

And it came! In the midst of a calm as profound as a sleep of peace, the thunderbolt fell that struck consternation, not only among all right-thinking men upon the floor of Congress, but all honest souls to the remotest bounds of the Union. It was in the midst of the temporary calm I have just mentioned, that a Senator arose and presented a bill for the repeal of a treaty hitherto held so sacred that the most reckless of political adventurers had not dared to dream of meddling with it until now.

It was no very extravagant figure of speech to call that event a thunderbolt. It took the Senate, the House, and the nation by surprise. It had the momentary stunning effect of a thunderbolt when it fell. Men were struck with consternation, heard as doubting the evidence of their own senses, and for a time remained dumb with astonishment.

Then followed indignation which we all know to be anything but a "dumb devil," whether it possess a man or a body of men. And a tempest of opposition arose that in its turn provoked a storm of assault from the friends of the bill, and then the war raged fast and furious. Not very "parliamentary" was the character of the debates upon that question, for it was indeed a time that "tried men's souls," "what manner of spirit they were of."

Mr. Sutherland was among the foremost, most earnest

and strenuous among the opponents of the bill. I have said elsewhere that if Mark Sutherland were remarkable for one trait above all others it was for his severe sense of *justice*. It was this that had led, or rather driven him to his early sacrifices; it was this that had governed all his conduct and changed the whole current of his life. And it was this sense of justice stung to the quick that had roused the dormant faculties of his mind, and woke his spirit "all the stronger that it slept so long." With all his strength of intellect and will, he wrought in the cause of national good faith and political righteousness, both at stake in the issue of the pending act. Other men, abler men, older men, veterans in the political arena, toiled with equal zeal and greater power, and long and faithfully was the contest kept up. All that man could do to prevent that breach of political faith was done; but, alas! the powers of evil carried the day: the bill was passed, the sacred treaty repealed, and the cause of justice lost at least for the time.

At the close of this the second session of his services, Mr. Sutherland returned once more to his home and to his constituents, who received him with cordiality; he had done what was possible for the cause of right. Thus six years passed in the distracting life of a politician, six years since his Rosalie went to heaven, and still Mark Sutherland was a lonely man. He now entered society freely, both in Washington City, during the session of Congress, and at the various watering-places, or at home in his own adopted State. But neither the rustic beauty of the country maidens in his own neighbourhood, nor the refined grace of the city belles that yearly congregate at the capital,

had been able to attract his heart from its fidelity to the memory of his sainted Rosalie. And at the end of six years' widowhood, though still in the early prime of life, eminently handsome and graceful, and as distinguished for elegance and accomplishments in the drawing room as for talent and eloquence in the Senate chamber; though honoured by the country and courted by society; though constantly thrown among the young, the beautiful, the gay and the fascinating; though admired by women as well as distinguished by men—Mark Sutherland was still alone—still faithful to an earthly memory that had also become a heavenly hope, and his angel-wife, Rosalie, had no mortal rival.

CHAPTER XXXV.

TO WED THE EARLIEST LOVED.

"Joy circles round, and fancy plays,
And hearts are warmed, and faces bloom,
As drinking health to bride and groom,
We wish them stores of happy days.

Nor count me all to blame if I
Conjecture of a *stiller guest*,
Perchance, perchance, among the rest,
And, though in silence, wishing joy."—*Tennyson.*

AND where, during all these years, was India, the once fair, though faulty "Pearl of Pearl River?" Alas! how many a ship-wrecked voyager there is upon the strands of life—still making what stand he

can against the overwhelming waves of despair that, in every advancing tide, threaten to sweep him to utter destruction! Oh life! oh mystery of life! when and where shall be found thy true solution?

When India had administered upon the estate of her deceased father, who had survived the discovery of his guilt but a few months,—when she had settled every just claim upon it,—she found herself, as she had predicted, very poor. When the last debt was paid, the surplus fund was so small that it would not have met even her moderate expenses for one year.

And the once haughty India, haughty now no longer, found it necessary to do something for her own support. In a legal point of view, it was not by any means obligatory upon India to impoverish herself to pay her father's or her husband's debts. A portion of the property, sufficient for her own comfortable and even elegant maintenance, she might still have withheld from the creditors; but with a late though noble sense of justice—emulative of Mark's own strict rectitude—she resolved to pay the uttermost farthing, and clear, as much as possible, from blame the memory of the dead, by cancelling, at least, their pecuniary obligations; even though by doing so she should leave herself quite penniless. In vain her friends and neighbours remonstrated. India, once so obstinate in wrong, could be equally firm in right.

The estate settled, the creditors all paid off, all other claims of justice satisfied, and India, with a small surplus, turned to consider what next she should do.

In the South, luxurious houses enough were open to her. All—even those who would fain, out of kindness, have persuaded her to reserve a portion of

her fortune from the claims of justice—were eloquent in the praise of that high sense of honour that led her to disregard alike her own self-interest and their benevolent counsel. And many among the wealthy families of her acquaintance, with true Southern hospitality, invited and pressed her to come and make their house her home for as long as she liked. And there is no doubt but that the high-born, beautiful, and accomplished young widow, would have been considered a great acquisition in the drawing-room of any country house. But at no time of her life would India have endured such a life of luxurious dependence—and even now, when her heart had been disciplined and chastened by sorrow, she much preferred the honest independence of labour. Therefore she gratefully and somewhat proudly, withal, declined the invitations of her friends, bade them kindly adieu, and left the neighbourhood.

Something of the old haughty reserve remaining, perhaps, induced her to cover her retreat. And so—many of her friends—Mark among others—had quite lost trace of her.

And she, also, had lost sight of *all*, except of Mark Sutherland, whose rising star she watched from afar, with mingled emotions of pride, joy, and passionate regret.

She had effectually hidden herself in the great city of New York, where, as a teacher of music and drawing, she lived in strict retirement, and whence she watched the upward progress of the successful statesman.

At the close of his first senatorial term, Mark Sutherland had been set up as the candidate of the

liberal party for one of the highest offices in the gift of the people. Political business, about this time, called Mr. Sutherland to New York. He was received with enthusiasm by the friends of his party, and when his business was dispatched, he entered freely into the fashionable society of the city.

India had seen his arrival announced with the usual flourish of the press trumpets. And every day she saw his honours and his triumphs chronicled in the morning and evening papers. She could not bear the thought of meeting him in her poverty now. But in that extensive wilderness of crowded buildings, called New York, she believed herself as completely screened from observation and discovery as though she had been away in London or in Paris, or in a desert or a forest. And she also felt assured that he had not the slightest clue to her dwelling place.

But it happened that, during his sojourn in New York, Mr. Sutherland had consented, with feelings partly of amusement and partly of annoyance, to sit for his portrait, to adorn some lyceum or lecture room. And the painting had been finished and hung up, and had attracted crowds of his friends and admirers—for a few days—and then had been left "alone in its glory."

One morning, at an hour so early that it was highly improbable he should find any other visitors there, Mr. Sutherland went to the lyceum to procure a rare volume on jurisprudence. The librarian was in his stall, but otherwise the room seemed deserted.

Perhaps Mr. Sutherland's foot was light in stepping —perhaps the carpet was thick and soft, or it might be that the lady he presently saw standing before his

portrait was so abstracted that she could not hear the entrance of another visitor. At all events, she did not perceive his approach, and Mr. Sutherland went past, selected his volume, and had turned to go back, when a casual glance at the lady, and a flutter of her brown veil, disclosed to his astonished eyes the face of India.

He could scarcely suppress an exclamation of joy. His first impulse was to spring forward and greet her. Had he been some years younger, he would have done so on the spur of the moment; but age brings caution and teaches self-restraint; and it was well he refrained, for a second glance at that pale, impassioned face, with those dark, burning eyes, fixed with such a fascinated gaze upon the picture before her, warned him that by no rude shock must that colourless, motionless woman be approached.

Softly and silently he drew away towards the other extremity of the long room, where the librarian sat in his stall.

"Mr. Ferguson, do you know the lady at the other end of the room?" he inquired of that gentleman.

"No, I do not," answered the librarian, after taking a look at India.

"Nor where she lives, of course?"

"Nor where she lives," said the librarian, looking up in some surprise.

"I supposed her to be a lady that I once knew, but I did not like to speak to her in uncertainty—that is all," said Mr. Sutherland, evasively.

The librarian was a grave man, as it befitted a custodian of grave books to be, and Mr. Sutherland's reputation for unvarying propriety of deportment was

beyond cavil, so there was no quizzing, and their talk ended there.

Mark Sutherland went down into the lobby, considering how best to introduce himself, without startling Mrs. Ashley. He might wait until she should come down, and then follow her home, ascertain her address, and call upon her the next day; but there appeared to him to be something about such a course as that he did not approve, something romantic, absurd, yet verging upon treachery. Besides, it was most probable that she would take an omnibus, when he should lose sight of her, unless, indeed, he should get into the same omnibus; to which there was the same great objection of presenting himself suddenly before her, which, after seeing the expression of her face, he dared not do; while, at the same time, it was the recollection of that very look that made him doubly anxious to meet her. After considering a while, he determined to address a letter to her through the city post-office. That would certainly reach her sooner or later.

He went home and put his purpose into execution.

He was unfit for study or for society that day. That sudden meeting with India, the revelation made by that look upon her worn but still lovely face, had stricken the rock in his bosom, and the long-sealed fountain of memory and affection was set free.

That motionless, colourless, most beautiful face—it haunted him all the day.

That afternoon he dressed to go to a dinner party, at a house on Fifth Avenue. On arriving at the place, just as he entered the hall, a lady closely veiled went out. That form and air! he could not be mistaken!

Again, with a start of irrepressible pleasure, he had recognised India.

"Who is that lady?" he inquired of the "Jeemes" of that hall.

"The music mistress, yer honour," answered "Jeemes," who happened in this case to be "Patrick."

"Do you know where she lives?"

"I'll inquire, yer honour," replied Patrick, opening the drawing-room door to admit the guest, and then departing on his errand. In a few moments he returned, with Mrs. Ashley's address.

It was in a distant part of the city. Yet gladly would Mark have sought out her retreat that night, had he been free to do so; but nothing but the most urgent necessity could now have excused him from the dinner got up in his own honour. So he was forced to restrain his impatience for that evening. Nay, more; having found out her residence and mentally fixed the hour that he should see her the next morning, he gave himself up to the festivities of the evening, and was once more the brilliant conversationist he was reputed to be. At dinner, he led in and sat next one of the most charming women in New York, and no doubt did his devoirs with equal grace and pleasure.

Yet neither is there any doubt that he was well satisfied when the evening's hospitality was over.

And he was still better pleased when the night was passed, and the morning came, and the sun arose, and he at last had leave to dress himself, dispatch an early breakfast, take a cab, and drive to the remote suburb where India lived.

Was it a private dwelling or a boarding-house?

The address gave no clue to that question—it designated only the street and the number. He hoped it was a private dwelling! He must see her alone! How would she receive him? There was no mistaking that look upon her face that had thrilled him, striking the whole "electric chord" of memory and passion! that look of mingled affection, aspiration, and passionate regret! How would she receive him? Such were the glad, anxious, questioning thoughts that chased each other through his mind, while the cab rolled on. In these tumultuous, half-delightful, half-painful recollections and anticipations the distance was passed.

"This is the place, sir," said the driver, as the cab drew up before a little cottage, surrounded by a small luxuriant flower garden, and literally covered and concealed by a complete thicket of tall rose-trees and climbing vines.

"So this is a private dwelling, and her love of beautiful surrounding survives all the crash of fortune and the wreck of life," thought Mark Sutherland, as he alighted and opened the gate leading into the yard.

Let us precede him, by a few moments.

India, who had risen from an almost untasted breakfast, had passed into the small parlour only to escape the eyes of her attendant, the pretty, loving Oriole, who had followed the fortunes of her mistress with the most devoted affection and fidelity, and who, if a cloud did but fall upon the brow of Mrs. Ashley, reflected it in the sadness of her own face.

But this morning, in the bitterness of her emotions, India could not endure the sad, wistful glances of poor

Oriole; so she had left the small sitting-room impatiently, and passed into the parlour, where she paced up and down with the fearful, half-suppressed excitement of some caged lioness.

Disciplined and chastened as her heart certainly had been in the trials of her life, India was still very far from Christian perfection. And, perhaps, now she needed a little of the sunshine of happiness, as well as the long, long cloud of sorrow, to nurture the growth of goodness in her heart. At all events, she found it very difficult to bear with fortitude the mortification and grief of the night before. She had met him on the steps of one of those Fifth Avenue palaces, where her pupils resided. She had met him! he had passed her, brushing her dress as he went! Though her veil was down, she had recognized him. And she knew by the start that he made, he recognized *her* as well! Yet he had passed without speaking! Ah! all her thoughts of the future possibilities of a rencounter that she dreaded and shrunk from, had not shaped a meeting so humiliating as this! She *had* feared that he would seek her out, and, from his pride of place, presume to patronize her, by endeavouring to improve her circumstances, giving her advice, offering her assistance—humiliations which to escape she would have fled to an alms-house—or, perhaps, plunged into a river, "but for the grace of God," for India was but half regenerated. But a rencounter so mortifying as this, she had never dreamed of. All the circumstances attending that chance meeting also combined to make it inexpressibly galling—*he* going into that house an honoured guest, for whom its saloons were illuminated and a feast prepared, and a choice company gathered:

she creeping out of it, a sort of hired servant with her wages in her hand. So, in the present bitterness of her mood, she looked at herself. And they had so met upon the steps, and he had seen her, recognized her, and passed her without speaking! "Ah! fool!" so she thought; "there was little need to dread that he would seek me out to benefit me. The 'great statesman' evidently has no wish to be bored by his poor relations. But oh, Mark! Mark! that *you* should have done such an unworthy thing! *you*, my one saving idea of manly excellence—that prosperity should have corrupted, and the world hardened, even *you!* When you upbraided me so bitterly, in the midst of my sorrows at Cashmere, I bore it all with a meekness—not very like *me!* because—oh! because I *saw and felt* what you would never acknowledge to your own heart—the secret, unacknowledged feeling that gave point, sting, and acrimony to all the bitter reproaches you uttered. Oh! Mark, in that day I read your heart as a woman only can! But all this is over—over—and you pass me without recognition," she said, sinking into a chair, dropping her head upon her hands, and giving way for the first time in years to a passionate flood of tears.

Hark! the bell rings—Oriole goes to the door. It is probably the postman, and India is too much depressed, and has too little to hope, to care much about the coming of that messenger of joy or of woe to so many households. But hark!

"Why, how do you do, Oriole? Do you recollect me, child? Yes? I am very glad to see you here! How is your mistress? Is she in?"

It is a rich, full-toned voice that speaks—a cordial,

familiar, life-giving voice—a voice that has power to thrill every nerve in her frame—in a word, it is Mark Sutherland's voice! and he is in the little hall, and in another moment he will be in the room.

Oh! Heaven! her face is pale, and bathed with tears—he must not see her thus! In a moment the blinds are drawn down, the curtains dropped, and the room obscured, and her chair is wheeled around with its back to the windows, so as to throw her face into deep shadow. So she will await him. But Oriole enters alone, with a card.

"It is Mr. Sutherland, madame, and if you are disengaged he will be glad to see you."

She bows in assent—she can do no more; and Oriole goes out, returns, and ushers in Mr. Sutherland.

"Mrs. Ashley"——

She rises, and extends her hand.

"Mrs. Ashley, I am very happy to see you again."

She essays to speak, but fails, and her self-possession utterly deserts her. The hand he has taken is cold as ice—he carries it to his lips.

"My dearest India, I am so happy to find you again, after all these years."

"All these years!"—she repeats his words, mechanically, as she sinks back in her chair.

He takes the nearest seat, and resumes—"I have sought you far and wide, I have sought you for so long, I have done all but advertise you!" He added, smiling—"Why have you hidden yourself so long from all your friends?"

"The old 'sinful pride' perhaps, Mark," she answered, half smiling in her turn.

"'Pride,' dear India? Ah! I understand you. Yet that same pride, in all its phases, has caused much vexation to those who love you, dear India."

"Do I not know it? And do I not regret it?"

"And to none has it caused more trouble than to *myself*."—But the conversation is growing personal, and closing in.

You and I, reader, are *de trop*—and will withdraw from the scene and wait.

The result was this—that Mr. Sutherland did not leave New York as soon as he had expected, by many weeks.

And one Sunday, before morning service, there was a quiet marriage ceremony performed before the altar of Grace Church.

And the next morning, in the list of passengers that sailed in the Baltic, for Liverpool, were the names of "Mr. and Mrs. Mark Sutherland, and two servants"—the latter being Oriole, who could not live without her mistress, and Mr. Sutherland's valet, who was no other than our old friend Billy Button, who had been well drilled for some years past, and now, in a speckless suit of black, and a spotless white neckcloth, presented one of the most respectable specimens of a gentleman's gentleman.

And in the meantime, Mr. Sutherland's elegant country seat on Lake Crystal, in one of the most thriving of the Western States, was left under the charge of that grand, impartial, large-hearted, broad-visioned specimen of manhood, Mr. Billy Bolling, who had received a *carte-blanche* for fitting up and refurnishing the house; for, however uncertain any one might be as to Mr. Bolling's opinions, no one could doubt

his *taste*, which was really exquisite. And that gentleman took the greatest possible delight in preparing the mansion for the reception of the bride.

And, by the way, Mr. Bolling, by his universal agreeableness, conquered such a popularity in his own district, that he has been talked of for the Legislature, and would certainly have been made a candidate, only it seemed impossible by any means to arrive at his politics, he being claimed with equal reason by all parties.

Early in the winter, Mr. and Mrs. Sutherland returned to the United States. They went first, by invitation and pre-engagement, to spend a month among their relatives in the South.

They went to Texas, where they found Mrs. Wells, still a hale and handsome woman, though on the shady side of fifty, and the Doctor more appreciative of her real worth, and more attached to her now than he was at the period of his mercenary marriage. They spent one happy month with the Wellses, and then, accompanied by Mrs. Wells, went into Louisiana, to pay a long-promised visit to Lincoln Lauderdale and his vivacious little lady.

They found them well and prosperous, and surrounded by a thriving young family. Little change had time made in Lincoln or the piquant "Nan." A month was whiled away in their pleasant society, and so it was near spring before the Sutherlands, still accompanied by Mrs. Wells, set out up the river for their North-Western home.

And it was quite spring when they reached the beautiful shores of Lake Crystal, and entered their

own elegant home. Mrs. Wells remained with them and spent the summer.

And she still continues to come every year to spend her summers with her "beloved Mark," her "only child." Mark and India occasionally return those visits in the winter—that is, when Mr. Sutherland's official duties permit him to do so. For Mark Sutherland is still a rising politician, adored by one party and abhorred by another. And, in the present hopeful state of the public mind, it is impossible to predict of any given contest whether the people mean to elect or mob their own candidate.

But, aside from Mr. Sutherland's public life, his home is a very happy one. In his profession he has realized a handsome fortune. By the death of her Uncle Paul, at an advanced age, India has inherited a large property, so that they are entirely independent in their pecuniary circumstances. India is as beautiful but no longer as proud as Juno, Queen of Goddesses, and is the centre of a very refined and intellectual circle. They have two fine children—a beautiful boy, whom they named Mark—and a lovely little girl, whom they called India.

Mrs. Sutherland, in a mood of magnanimity, proposed that this child should be christened Rosalie; but Mr. Sutherland could by no means be brought to consent to that. No! the child must have its mother's name—only hers. And so she had. India was flattered and pleased. And Mark Sutherland was exactly right.

Was Rosalie then forgotten?

No! no! and a thousand times no! She was well remembered. Her name was a sacred, sacred name,

that he could not bear to give to another creature. It was hers and hers only; it represented *her* individuality; it stood to him for all that was most beautiful, pure, lovely and sweet—aye, heavenly! He could not bear to bestow it upon India's child, passionately as he loved that child and its mother. Reader, do you understand that? India had once been his boyhood's passion, as she was now his manhood's love. He preferred her immeasurably before all living women. She was a handsome, intellectual, and warm-hearted woman, eminently fitted to make a man like Mark Sutherland happy. And his marriage with her was eminently happy.

The beautiful India was his Hertha, but there was one who had gone before who was and *is* his Psyche. And deep in his heart is a chamber into which no mortal creature entereth—a sanctuary closely veiled from all human knowledge—a holy of holies, sacred to one earthly memory and one heavenly hope—consecrated to the veiled worship of his angel wife—

ROSALIE.

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